



# GREAT COMPOSERS

BOOK II

TYAGARAJA

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## P R E F A C E

FROM the time I began learning the musical compositions of Tyāgarāja, I began to develop a feeling of reverence towards the Great Composer. The glowing accounts of his life and the inner meanings of many of his compositions given to me off and on by my Saṅgitāchāryas, the late Maṇattaṭṭai Duraisvāmi Ayyar and Tiruvottiyūr S. A. Rāmasvāmi Ayyar (themselves members of Tyāgarāja's Siṣya parampara), created in me an unquenchable thirst to carry on detailed studies and researches in the life and compositions of the Saint. The illuminating details concerning him furnished by the late K. K. Rāmasvāmi Bhāgavatar of Wālājāpēṭ and other senior musicians gave a further impetus to me in my work. I read with care all the available literature on Tyāgarāja in the South Indian languages and in English. I began making vigorous enquiries concerning this gem of the Kākarla vams'a from the members of his line of disciples scattered in different parts of South India. The perusal of the Wālājāpēṭ Collection of manuscripts, now housed in the Saurāṣṭra Sabha Library, Madurai proved a great blessing to me. That Collection furnished a lot of fresh and illuminating material. I got clarification for many of the conflicting accounts of the composer published in earlier works. As a result of all this, I am able to place before the public this humble sketch of the Great Saint and Composer of South India. I am glad that I am able to publish this work just on the eve of the Composer's 108th anniversary, coming off in January 1955.



I also had the opportunity of perusing the unpublished Manuscripts of A. M. Chinnasvāmi Mudaliyār, containing the kritis of Tyāgarāja in staff notation. Mr. Mudaliyār got his music directly from the Umaiyālpuram disciples of Tyāgarāja and therefore his renderings are correct and authentic. One of the Proof sheets of this work corrected by Wālājāpēṭ Kṛṣṇasvāmi Bhāgavatar is also found in the Saurāṣṭra Sabha Library, Madurai.

If readers find in this book, some new and interesting material concerning Tyāgarāja, it is due to the fact that I was able to peruse manuscripts not noticed by earlier biographers. Further I have had the privilege of getting valuable information from the line of disciples belonging to five of the Saint's Siṣyas: Viṇa Kuppayyar, Mānambuchāvaḍi Veṅkaṭa-subbayyar, Umaiyālpuram Kṛṣṇa Bhāgavatar and Sundara Bhāgavatar, Wālājāpēṭ Kṛṣṇasvāmi Bhāgavatar and Tilla-sthānam Rāma Ayyaṅgar. The local enquiries made by me at S'riraṅgam, Tiruvārūr, Kōvūr, Tirupati, Wālājāpēṭ, Kāñchīpuram and other places visited by Tyāgarāja also yielded fruitful results.

Tyāgarāja is the rare example of a person who was great in saṅgīta, sāhitya and bhakti. He has inspired not only his contemporaries but also many of the musicians and composers who came after him. Most of the composers of the Post-Tyāgarāja period belong to his Siṣya parampara. The magic of his sāhityas lies in the fact that they breathe the sweet fragrance of melody. He has not used a strained language. His compositions are the permanent and standard repertoire of every performer of classical music. The unmistakable identity of the rāgas of his compositions and the cogency of their

saṅgatis endow them with a special charm. Many of his compositions are noted for their poetic imagery, flashing ideas and delicate sentiments. The golden tenets, enshrined in the *Vēdas*, *Upaniṣads* and *Purāṇas* have been re-stated by him in a remarkably refreshing and telling manner. A study of his compositions enables one to get bhāvajñānam.

In the field of musical creation, Tyāgarāja was a daring experimenter and a successful experimenter too. His compositions in the tiny but fascinating rāgas - *vinta rāgālu* to use his own expression, shine as sparkling gems amidst his pieces in Prasiddha rāgas. He had a gift for shaping new rāgas. His melodies are faultless in every respect.

Through his sāhityas, Tyāgarāja has shown the distinction between the diction suitable for poetry (*Padya rachana*) and the diction suitable for the sāhitya of musical compositions (*Pāṭa rachana* or *Gēya rachana*). There are words which are good for poetry but not necessarily good for the sāhitya of musical compositions. The words figuring in his musical compositions are just the words suitable for the particular dhātus. That is why those words along with the music sound so finely. It is on account of this fact that translations of Tyāgarāja's songs in other languages made with the object of being sung to the original dhātus have not proved successful.

More than 200 compositions of Tyāgarāja have been referred to in this Book. The *Kōvūr Pañcharatna* and the *Tiruvottiyūr Pañcharatna* constitute a happy combination, in that the five pieces of the former group are in praise of Śiva and the five pieces of the latter group are in praise of Ambikā.

I am alive to the fact that certain topics mentioned in Chapter XII could have found a place in the earlier chapters but this could not be helped in this Edition.

I would like to express my indebtedness to the following poets, scholars, musicians and composers who have either thrown light on Tyāgarāja's compositions or have otherwise given valuable details concerning him :—

- (1) Challapalle Veṅkaṭa S'āstri ;
- (2) Kāsi Kṛṣṇāchārya ;
- (3) Rāmuḍu Bhāgavatar of Tiruvaiyār ;
- (4) T. S. Sabhēs'a Ayyar, Principal, Music College, Annamalai University ;
- (5) Kīrtanāchārya C. R. S'rīnivāsa Ayyaṅgar ;
- (6) Bharatam Nārāyanasvāmi Ayyar ;
- (7) Maraṅgāpuri Violinist Gōpālakṛṣṇa Ayyar ;
- (8) Dr. T. S'rīnivāsa Rāghavāchāri ;
- (9) Pasumārti Kṛṣṇamūrti S'āstri ;
- (10) Māyavaram T. R. Viśvanātha S'āstri ;
- (11) S. Duraisvāmi Ayyar (Advocate and nephew of Tiruvottiyūr Tyāgayyar) ;
- (12) N. Tyāgarāman (Grandson of Umaiyaḷpuram Kṛṣṇa Bhāgavatar) ;
- (13) T. V. Subba Rao ; and
- (14) Maḍura Subrahmaṇya Ayyar.

My thanks are due to Sri S. Sathyalingam for lending me ten of the Photographs figuring in this book.

In Great Composers - Book III, I will be publishing the lives of Muthusvāmi Dikṣitar, Gōpālakṛṣṇa Bhārati, Svāti Tirunāl and other Composers.

Madras, }  
21st Oct. 1954. }

*THE AUTHOR.*

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PLATE I



Tyāgarāja in Uñchavritti Costume, with the tambūra in his right hand and the chipla in his left hand.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

TYĀGARAJA, the poet, saint and composer is the greatest name in the history of modern South Indian music. He is one of those minstrels of God, who come to this world to contribute to human happiness and uplift. A composer of his stamp comes in the life-history of a nation, once in a five hundred years. He has shed lustre on South Indian music by his melodious and soul stirring compositions. His greatness as a composer has practically eclipsed his greatness in all other branches of learning. He was a *sahaja vāggēyakāra*. His compositions have rightly become classics. He was a prolific composer and composed with uncommon facility. He was a versatile genius. He has left behind him compositions belonging to the realms of pure music and applied music. His compositions which help a *rasika* to taste something of the sweet nectar of *nija saṅgīta* have earned for him undying fame. To him, music was not merely a means to an end but an end by itself.

Tyāgarāja lived during a period of intense musical activity. His age was in fact the brightest period in the history of South Indian music. Many of the musical luminaries who are the pride of Karnāṭic music lived during his time. The atmosphere in Tanjore and round about Tiruvaīyār at that time was just the atmosphere that was conducive to the development of his musical genius.



Under such congenial environments, Tyāgarāja grew up and soon established himself as a star of first magnitude in the firmament of South Indian music. He inherited his musical talents from his maternal ancestors and his literary talents from his paternal ancestors. His maternal grandfather was Viñā Kālahasti Ayyar, a samasthāna vidvān in the court of Tanjore and his paternal grandfather was Girirājakavi, the author of some Yakshagāṇas and songs on Vēdāntic themes. Tyāgarāja showed promise of his future greatness in music even in his teens. His early compositions attracted the attention of such eminent scholars of the time as Rāma S'ēsha S'āstri and Bhāshyam Krishṇa S'āstri. Soṇṭi Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Dās, his Guru saw in his pupil a rare type of a musical prodigy. The Vaiṇika Guru had foretaste of his pupil's greatness.

Tyāgarāja was a born genius and a gifted composer. He was an expert Vaiṇika and a brilliant singer. It is known that he possessed a Gandharva sārīram (voice). The fact that he expounded Dēvagāndhāri rāga for six days during his stay in Madras is proof of his extraordinary creative talent. He has left behind him, gems belonging to the spheres of art music, sacred music and operatic music. The art of composing came to him naturally. He was a scholar in Sanskrit and Telugu and was proficient in the Jyōtisha, Gaṇita and Mantra s'āstras. His compositions are finished products and it is difficult to improve upon them. His music is of unsurpassable nobility and greatness. The individuality of his different pieces in one and the same rāga is startling and amazing. In Tōḍi rāga alone he has composed more than 30 pieces. In his compositions we get the happy blending of the intellectual and the emotional qualities. He composed because of the inner

urge within him. This accounts principally for the sterling worth of his compositions. His scholarly Kritis, his Divyanāma Kirtanas and Utsava Sampradāya Kirtanas, his operas, his Sata rāga ratnamālīka and his Group Kritis will for ever be remembered by Posterity with pride and zeal. He enjoyed Divine grace in the fullest measure. In the history of world music, it is perhaps difficult to name another composer who was at the same time a poet, saint and philosopher and who lived up to high ideals, and who did not care for riches and the fleeting pleasures of this world.

Tyāgarāja spoke the language of absolute music. He emphasised in no uncertain terms that it was possible for a person to attain Mōksha through the path of pure music, God himself was Nādabrahma — Embodiment of music. Contemplation of God through pure music led one to that Divine consciousness longed for by sages. Tyāgarāja's Kritis are so many specimens of absolute music. The presence of beautiful Sāhityas in them only serve to adorn his Kritis more and make them doubly great. It is a happy thing for us that he introduced all his surging poetic thoughts and ideas in his Kritis instead of embodying them in separate poems in which case, his appeal would have been only to a limited section of the public and to people interested in pure literature.

Tyāgarāja is the Prince amongst composers. His name and fame are not merely confined to the land of his birth. His compositions are known in foreign countries. In his monumental work entitled *Oriental Music in European Notation* published in 1892, Mr. Chinnasvāmi Mudaliār has printed in staff notation many of Tyāgarāja's Kritis.

This book has made foreign scholars understand something of the genius of the great Indian composer. Tyāgarāja occupies the same position in Indian music as Beethoven in European music.

Tyāgarāja belongs to that galaxy of saints and seers who have made India great. He has founded a *Musical empire* which will withstand the test of time. India's spiritual glory and tradition have been kept alive by him. He has broadcast the eternal wisdom of the sages of India through his songs. It is of special significance that he was presented with the "*Svarārṇava*" a lakṣhaṇa grantha, by the sage Nārada, according to tradition.

Tyāgarāja's compositions constitute a Treasury of musical wisdom and Sage utterances. They have a dynamic musical energy in them. The generating proto-plasmic force is there. When studied intensively, they have the magic force of developing in one, the creative abilities and mould him into a composer of front rank.

Tyāgarāja was an enlightened soul. He represents the essence and peak of our culture. His compositions reveal the soul of South Indian music. His two Kritis : "*Vidulaku mrokkeda*" (Māyāmālāvagaṇa rāga) and "*Saṅgita nānamu*" (Dhanyāsi rāga) prove that he was familiar with many of the ancient authorities and their works.

The concept of *Nāda rachana* i.e. a musical composition in the real sense of the term actually begins with him and his brilliant contemporaries. Prior to his time, more value was attached to the sāhitya and music was thought of as only a cloak to clothe the sāhitya.

This accounts for the fact that there are a number of sāhityas in the same tune by earlier composers and sometimes even by the same composer. In every one of Tyāgarāja's kritis we find a new varṇa meṭṭu. He has carved out of rāgas, beautiful forms of enchanting beauty.

In Tyāgarāja's kritis we find the happy blending of the cultural and spiritual elements. His ambition was to create new forms which would at the same time satisfy the cultural and spiritual needs of the nation. The top-ranking performer derives as much musical ecstasy from his compositions as the bhakta who derives spiritual solace.

Tyāgarāja is the greatest composer of the modern period. His charming, flowing, captivating and refreshingly beautiful style of musical writing and his sāhityas teeming with Upanishadic truths and sublime thoughts have a perennial appeal. The versatile and prolific nature of his compositions, his *gandharva gāna* coupled with the ring and splendour of his voice, the colourful incidents in his life, all these evoked the admiration of his contemporaries. He was adored like a saint even in his life time. He preached the gospel of the realisation of God through the combined path of music and devotion. While Bōdēndra Sadguru Svāmi emphasised the recital of Rāma nāma, Tyāgarāja chalked out an easier path by emphasising the channel of gāna mārga in the recital of the name of the Lord. The musical sound became a powerful vehicle in his hands for the portrayal of the swelling musical thoughts. He has given to us in clear terms the mystical experiences of a

nāda yōgi. He has pointed out the relative significance of music (Saṅgīta), musical knowledge (Saṅgīta ñāna) and knowledge of the science of music (Saṅgīta S'āstra ñāna). In his Kritis we find the happy culmination of high flown music and splendid sāhitya and both of them springing from Bhakti. This feature of his compositions may be summed up in the phrase, *Kritiguṇatrayam*. It is but natural that scholars should be making a ceaseless quest to know more and more concerning such a luminary.

#### SOURCES FOR THE LIFE OF TYAGARAJA

Hero worship is inherent in human nature. People are interested not only in the magnificent works left by a poet or a composer but also in his life, pedigree, education, the inner workings of his mind, the preparation he made for his career, the ordeals he had to pass through before establishing himself as a poet or composer of rank and many other details. In India due to some cause not easily explicable, people were interested more in the work of a person than in his biography or the evolution of his genius. We know precious little concerning the architects who have built the magnificent temples and musical stone pillars and the composers who have shed lustre on Indian music by their magnificent compositions. Under such circumstances, the task of the research scholar in trying to collect authentic details concerning the life of a great composer like Tyāgarāja, is very arduous. Added to this is another phenomenon. Once a person

becomes great in India, legends grow around him. In the case of Tyāgarāja, there are many such legends and stories. Patient research has doubtless confirmed the truth of some of those stories and disproved many others.

Tyāgarāja has not left an autobiography. He had hardly the time to do that. Nor had he with him a Boswell or a Lockhart to chronicle all the incidents in his life. With the exception of two or three of his disciples, the rest were more engrossed in learning his compositions than in chronicling the incidents in his life. But luckily for us enough sources exist from which it is possible to glean a fairly authentic biography of this born composer of Tiruvaiyār. These sources may be analysed into:—

1. The Manuscript biographies of Tyāgarāja left by his disciples. There is one palm leaf manuscript written by Wālājāpet Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar and Tanjore Rāma Rāo and another Paper manuscript by Wālājāpet Krishṇasvāmi Bhāgavatar.
2. Biographical accounts contained in Printed Books published after him.
3. Internal evidences furnished by his compositions.
4. Oral Tradition.
5. References to him in the compositions written in his praise by his disciples and subsequent composers.

## GREAT COMPOSERS - BOOK II

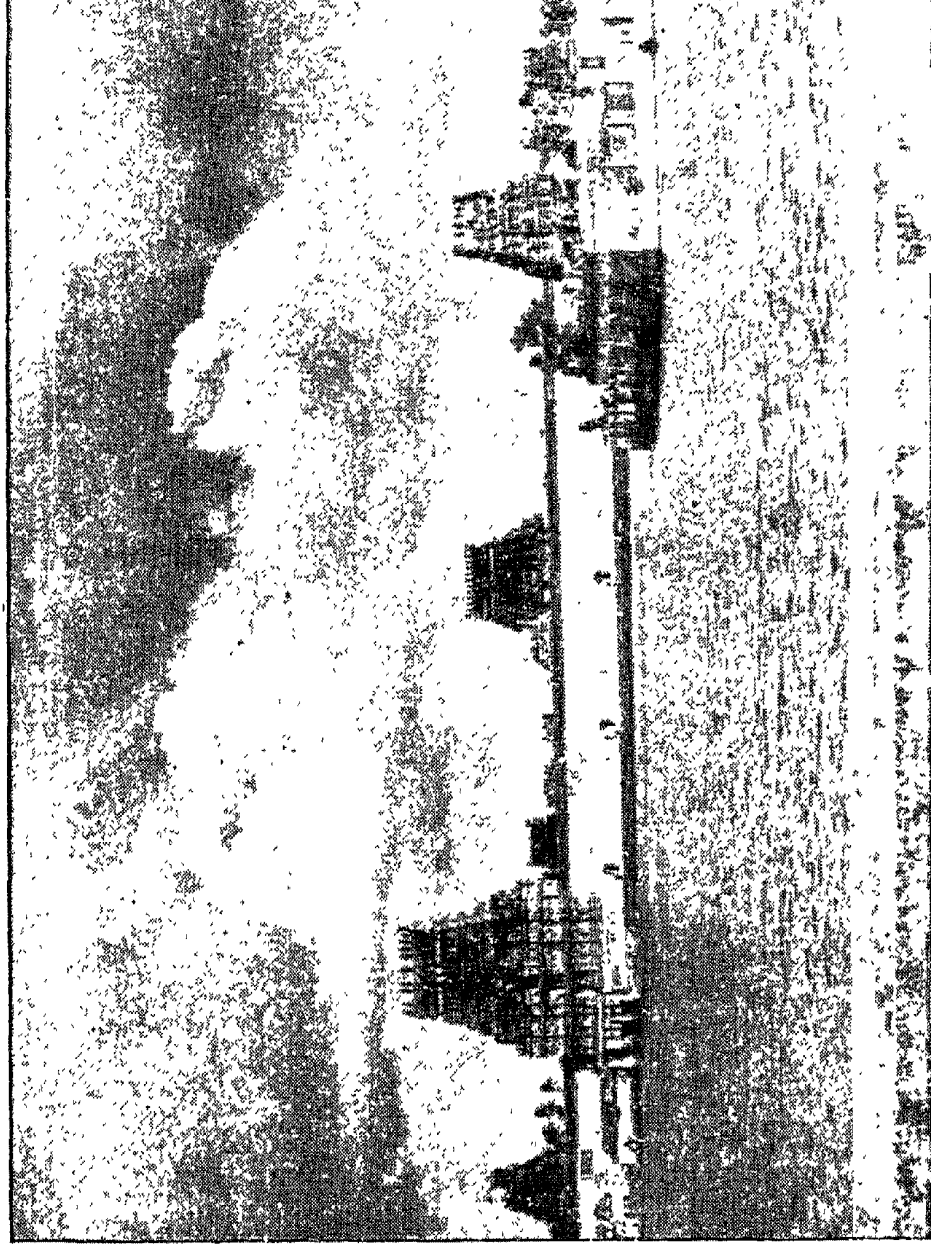
6. Accounts of him preserved in the Diaries of scholars and *rasikas* who visited him.
7. Accounts in State Publications, Gazetteers, Memoirs, etc. For instance, the Pudukkottai Gazetteer mentions how Tyāgarāja made an unlit lamp burn by singing *Jōtisvarūpiṇi rāga*.

The following account of the incident is given at the the bottom of p. 870 of A Manual of The Pudukkottai State Volume II, Part I (Second and Revised Edition) 1940.

“Tradition speaks of a strange phenomenon that is alleged to have happened during S’ri Tyāgarāja’s visit to Pudukōṭṭai. The Rājah proposed a strange test to the musicians assembled in his Court. He placed an unlit lamp amidst them and challenged them to light it with their songs and without using a match. Encouraged by his Guru, who was also present, Tyāgarāja sang the *rāga Jōyti-svarūpiṇi*. To the wonder of the assembly, the wick it is said, caught fire and shone with varying brilliance according to the gradations of the *rāga*.”

The details furnished by these sources are referred to in the subsequent Chapters. Also see the Chapter on Bibliography of Tyāgarāja.

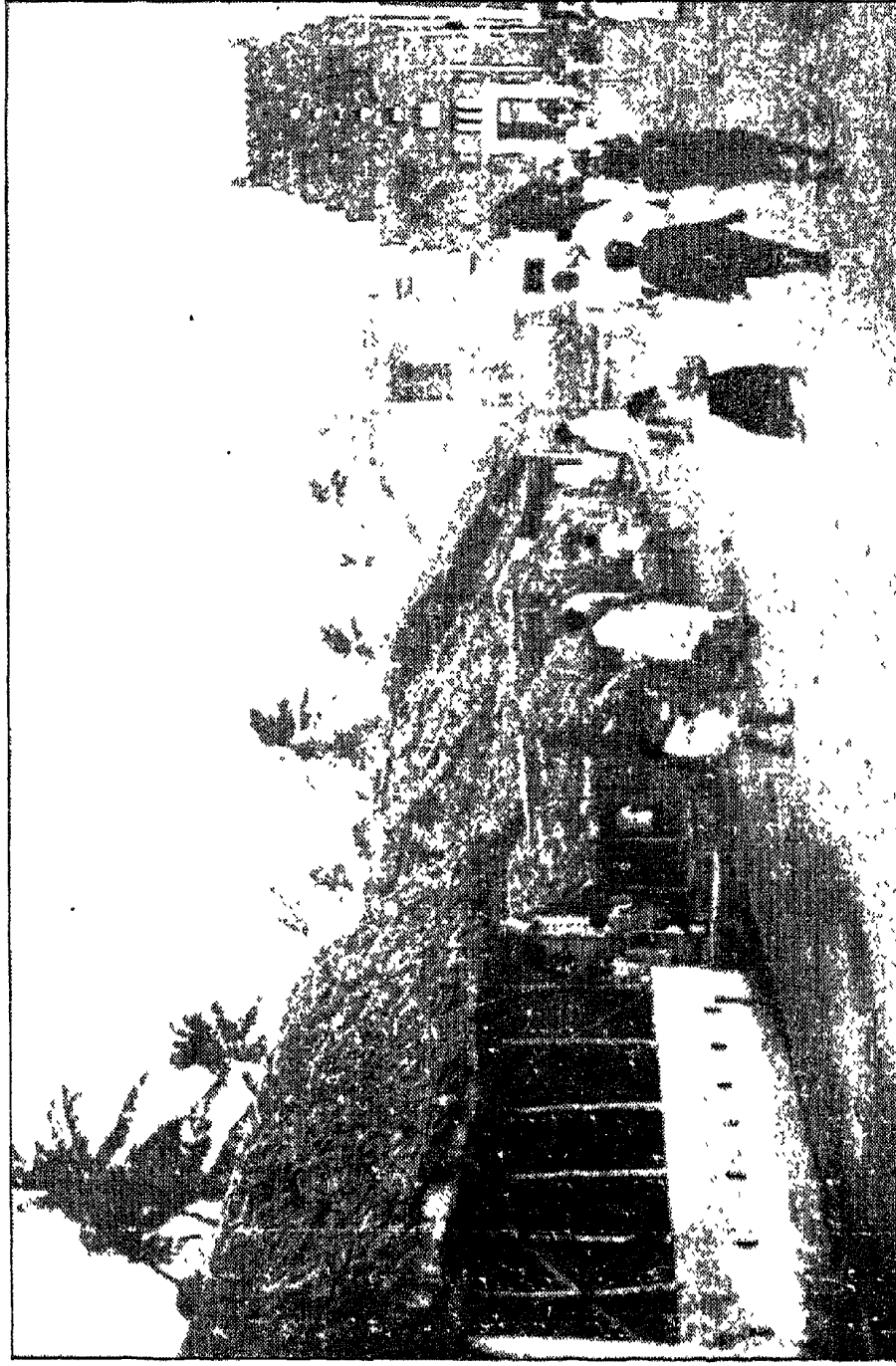
PLATE II



Tiruvārūr temple, with the Kamalālayam, the famous tank in front.



PLATE III



New Street, Tiruvārūr.  
The house where Tyāgarāja was born is indicated by an arrow mark.

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

TRADITION has it that prior to his birth, Tyāgarāja, the presiding Deity of the Temple at Tiruvārūr appeared to Rāmabrahmaṇ (the father of the great composer) in dream and said that a male child, who will shine as a *Saṅgita Sāhitya Kalā Koviduḍu* will be born to him and that he may be named Tyāgarāja.

### DATE OF BIRTH

Tyāgarāja was born in Tiruvārūr in Tanjore District on the 25th of Chitra of the Sarvajittu year corresponding to 4th May 1767. The house in which he was born is in New Street and bears the Door Number 6. He was born on a Monday in Pūsa nakshatram and Kaṭaka lāgam. The discovery of the horoscope of Tyāgarāja carefully preserved on a palm leaf in the Wālājāpet Collection has helped to establish this date. Prior to the discovery of the horoscope, various estimates have been given of his age. It is definitely known that he passed away on the Pushya Bahula Panchami Day of the Parābhava samvatsara, corresponding to the 6th January 1847.

Subbarāma Dikshitar in the *Saṅgita Sampradāya Pradarsini* mentions that Tyāgarāja lived for 77 years thereby suggesting that he must have been born in the

year 1770. Panju Bhāgavatar in his Tamil biography of the composer mentions that Tyāgarāja lived for 88 years, thereby suggesting that he must have been born in 1759. Whereas no biographer has given the precise date of birth of Tyāgarāja, the number of years that the great composer lived has been estimated to vary between 77 and 88.

If Tyāgarāja had lived for 88 years, the great event of S'atābhishēkam must have been celebrated about his 83rd year. It is nowhere on record nor have we heard from Karna parampara that this celebration took place. Let it be remembered that Tyāgarāja became so famous in the latter part of his life that princes, pandits, poets ascetics and saṅgita vidvāns from different parts of India came to Tiruvaiyār, to pay homage to him. If the S'atābhishēkam did take place, his own sishyas, some of whom were poets and composers, would have commemorated the event with inspiring songs and poems. But we have no proof of the existence of such poems and songs. Mr. Rāmuḍu Bhāgavatar of Tiruvaiyār (the great grandson of Tyāgarāja's elder brother) and many other persons whom I have enquired told me that before the S'atābhishēkam took place, Tyāgarāja attained *siddhi*.

Secondly there is the strong tradition in the family of S'yāma S'āstri, that S'yāma S'āstri was senior to

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§ In the *Sangita Sampradaya Pradarsini* the biography of Syama Sastri is given before that of Tyagaraja. The various composers in the biographical section of that work are presented in the chronological order. Subbarama Dikshitar knew that Syama Sastri was senior to Tyagaraja in age and so has given precedence to him over Tyagaraja.

Tyāgarāja in age. It is well known that the Saint of Tiruvaīyār had a great regard for S'yāma S'āstri. This might be attributed to two causes: (1) that his contemporary was a brilliant composer and a sterling Dēvi bhakta and (2) that he was senior to him in age. The late Kīrtanāchārya C. R. S'rīnivāsa Ayyaṅgār in his article in the *Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. III, P. 584 mentions that of the Musical Trinity, S'yāma S'āstri was the oldest.

It is a matter of good fortune for us, that the palm leaf containing the date of birth of Tyāgarāja had been carefully preserved. In this palm leaf, the date of birth of Tyāgarāja as also that of his disciple, Wālājāpet Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar are given side by side, by Kavi Veṅkaṭa Sūri. This Veṅkaṭa Sūri was a brilliant poet and is the author of Nowkā Charitram in Sanskrit verse (now published). He was a disciple of Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar. Since he gives the dates of birth of his guru and his guru's guru (Tyāgarāja) in one and the same leaf they may be taken as correct. In India's religious and cultural history we find most of our great men living for 33 years or 80 years approximately. Tyāgarāja belonged to the latter category.

### HIS PEDIGREE

Tyāgarāja was a Telugu Brahmin of the Murigināḍu sect. He belonged to the Bhāradvāja gōtra and Āpastamba sūtra. He came of the †Kākārla vamsa and

†Kākārla is a village in the Cumbum Taluq of [ vide p. 12

belonged to the group, Cherukuruvāḷḷu. In the 5th kanda pada at the commencement of his opera, *Nowkā Charitram*, he refers to himself as the moon of the Kākarla samudra :—

Kākarlāmbudhi chandruḍu - S'rikaruḍaku Tyāgarāja  
chittanivēs'a  
Naukācharitra monarcheda - S'rikāntā chittagimpu  
S'rīraghurāmā ||

In the first verse of the *Maṅgaḷāshṭakam* of Wālājā-peṭ Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavata :—

S'rīmat kākarlavams'ābdi chandrāyamala tējasē  
Pūrṇāya puṇyas'ilāya Tyāgarājāya maṅgaḷam ||

and in the *Dhyāna ślōkas* in praise of the composer we find a similar reference.

Tyāgarāja refers to his being the son of Rāmabrahmam in the mudra charaṇa of the Kṛiti in Bilahari Rāga *Dorukuna ituvanti sēva*,

Rāmabrahma tanayuḍa Tyāgarājutābāḍuchu nūchagā

and also in the phalaśruti to his opera, *Prahlāda Bhakti Vijayam* :—

S'rīrāmabrahma tanaya Tyāgarājēna nirmītam  
Prahāda bhaktivijaya prabandham bhuktimuktidam ||

*From p. 11]* Kurnool District. The remote ancestors of Tyagaraja who lived in that village were encouraged during the reign of the Vijayanagar Kings to go and settle down in South to propagate Hindu culture. It may be of interest to note in this connection that words like *saliga* peculiar to the Rayalaseema dialect occur in the Sahityas of Tyagaraja.

Tyāgarāja's mother was Sītamma and she exercised not a little influence in moulding his character. The bard of Tiruvaīyār casually alludes to his parents in the pallavi of the Kriti, in Vasanta rāga "*Sītamma mā-yamma, Sri Rāmuḍu mā tanḍri*"

### PANCHANADA BRAHMAM

Sadās'iva	Sadānanda	Sachchidananda	Bāla	Girirāja
Brahmam	Brahmam	Brahmam	Brahmam	Brahmam
				(Giriraja Kavi)

Rāma Brahmam

Panchāpakēsan Rāmanāthan      Tyāgarāja  
(Jalpēsan)

Tyāgarāja's great grand-father was Panchanada Brah-mam. He had five sons and the last of them was Giri-rāja Brahmam or Girirāja Kavi. Sadās'iva Brahmam, Sadānanda Brahmam, Sachchidānanda Brahmam and Bāla Brahmam were the names of his other four sons. Two of them Panchanada Brahnam and Sadānanda Brahnam became yōgis early in their life and went to Sadānanda Kōna, a cave near Tiruvannāmalai. They did not return afterwards. Girirāja Kavi was a poet and composer. He was a samasthāna vidvān during the reign of Shahājī Mahārājah (1684—1711). Shahaji Mahārājah is well known as the author of the beautiful dance drama in Telugu, *Pallaki Sēvā Prabandham*. This dance drama was

performed in the Tiruvārūr temple on festival occasions in the past. Girirāja Kavi wrote Yakshagānas and songs on vēdāntic themes. He had five sons and of them Rāma Brahman became a renowned scholar. Rāma Brahman had his Rāma nāma sūtram from the Holy Pontiff of Marudanallūr Maṭh near Kumbakonam. Rāma Brahman married Sītamma. Three sons were born to him. They were named Panchāpakēsan, Rāmanāthan and Tyāgarāja. Rāmanāthan died young and Panchāpakēsan also called Jalpēsan lived to see Tyāgarāja's glory. Jalpēsan has been more sinned against than sinning. He was not such a cruel and heartless person as made out by some writers. Of course, it was a pity that he could not see eye to eye with the ideals that actuated his youngest brother. When Tyāgarāja refused the tempting offer from the Royal source, Jalpēsan burst forth:—

Ni Rāma bhajana poṭṭakāyenā? bhaṭṭakāyanā?

(These were the actual words uttered by him).

“Is your Rāma bhajana going to feed your stomach or get for you clothes?”

It was just a human reaction to Tyāgarāja's spirited reply in his well known Kṛiti “*Nidhi chāla*”

Tyāgarāja's maternal grandfather was Viṇā Kalahasti Ayyar, a samasthāna vidvān in the Tanjore Court. Tyāgarāja's mother was a good singer and she knew a large number of the songs of Purandara Dāsa.

The Mahārājah of Tanjore saw in Rāma Brahman a great scholar and a sterling devotee. He requested him to read and expound the *Rāmāyaṇa* in his court during the Rāmanavami festival. He gave him a piece of land, in Pasupatikōvil (Tanjore Dist.) and a house in Tiruvaīyār. This was the only property left by him to his two sons.

### TYAGARAJA'S HOUSE

After the demise of Rāma Brahman the house in Tirumanjana Veedhi in Tiruvaīyār was partitioned. The northern part fell to the share of Tyāgarāja and the southern part to that of his brother. The partition of the house was brought about by the good offices of the local Tahsildar. This Revenue Official was very much interested in Tyāgarāja. He saw with his own eyes the \*cruelties and tortures inflicted on the saintly composer by his brother. He thought the best way out of the difficulty was to make the brothers live separately. He persuaded the brothers to agree to partition. In the division, Tyāgarāja also got for his share the Ēkapīṭha vighraha which has been the main source of Inspiration to him. The partition has done good to both the brothers. Tyāgarāja was able to get on with his holy work without any hindrance. The divided elder brother soon noticed his folly and turned a new leaf.

At present Rāmuḍu Bhāgavatar, the great grandson of Jalpēsan (the elder brother of Tyāgarāja) lives in

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\*It is said that once Jalpēsan commanded Tyagaraja to stand in the street in sun for sometime, for some trivial offence.



the southern part of the house. The picture of Kōdaṇḍa Rāmasvāmi presented by Wālājāpet Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāga-vatai and which occasioned the song "*Nanupālimpa*" (Mōhana) is there. Tyāgarāja's daughter and grandson lived for many years in the house wherein the great composer lived. Later the house was sold away. This house has now been acquired by the Tyāgabrahma Ārādhana Mahōtsava Sabha. This place has now become a place of musical pilgrimage and thousands from all over India flock here to derive musical inspiration and spiritual exaltation. The person who purchased this house and was living there for some years told me that occasionally he and other members of his family got visions of the Saint in the Unchavritti\* robes and Pūja costume. There were occasions when they heard even the ringing of bells.

### UPANAYANAM AND MARRIAGE

The Upanayanam of Tyāgarāja took place in his 8th year (1774) and his marriage in his 18th year (1784). He had an only daughter by name Sitālakshmi. She was given in marriage to Akhilāṇḍapuram Kuppusvāmiāh. A son was born to them and he was named Panchāpakēsiāh. He proved a brilliant singer but died a premature death without leaving any issue. The widow of his grandson, Guruvamma by name, went to her father's house in Tanjore taking along with her the Ēkapīṭha vigraha, worshipped by Tyāgarāja. She died in Tanjore early in the 20th century. The vigraha can even now be seen in the house in Varāhappier lane, Tanjore., where she spent her last days. Tyāgarāja's direct line is, therefore extinct.

## CHAPTER III

### HIS CAREER AND PERSONALITY

TYAGARAJA was brought up with great care and affection by his parents. He showed early signs of his greatness. Even in his teens he showed powers at composing. He wrote his school-boy compositions on the walls of his house. The father noticed them and felt a certain amount of legitimate pride. He had them shown to such brilliant scholars of the time as Rāmas'ēsha S'āstri and Bhāshyam Krishṇa S'āstri. They opined that those compositions were of real worth and deserved preservation. "*Namō Namō Rāghavāya*" and "*Tavadāsōham*" (both of them, Divyanāma Kīrtanas and in Punnāgavarālī rāga) are two of his earliest attempts. Thus Tyāgarāja started his career as a composer of devotional songs.

Tyāgarāja as a boy became familiar with a number of Divyanāma kīrtanas of Vijaya Gōpāla and other composers sung by his father during bhajanas. Naturally, he first exercised his creative talents in the direction of composing Divyanāma kīrtanas. Tyāgarāja's mother commanded a large repertoire of the songs of Purandara Dāsa (1484—1564) and he learnt a number of them from her.

## TUTELAGE UNDER SONTI VENKATARAMANAYYA

As a boy he went every morning to the garden to pluck flowers for his father's pūjā. This garden lay in a place called Andanarkurichchi which was at a short distance from the North Māda Street of Tiruvaiyār. On his way he halted in front of the \*house of Soṭṭi Veṅkaṭaramaṇayya (also called Soṭṭi Viṇa Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Dās) and listened to the music lessons given by him to his disciples. One day, Rāmabrahmam noticed this. He requested Soṭṭi Veṅkaṭaramaṇayya to teach music to his son. The Guru condescended with great pleasure and soon discovered that Tyāgarāja was a prodigy. All that the Guru could possibly teach him was taught to him within the space of one year. At the conclusion of the tutelage, he blessed Tyāgarāja and ushered him into the world of music.

Tyāgarāja made an intensive preparation for his career as a composer. He came of a family noted alike for its literary and musical scholarship. He studied Telugu and Sanskrit from his father and attained scholarship in these two languages. He also attended the expositions of the Rāmāyaṇa, given by his father and this enabled him to get an intimate knowledge of the great epic. Early in his life he digested all the available works on music of the time. The thorough

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\*This house was situated near the corner of the North Mada Street and the lane that led to the Andanarkurichchi. This is a south-facing house and now bears the door No 86. This house, until some years back was the property of the Sonti family. It has since been sold and an advocate resides there now.

mastery of the science of music enabled him in later years to compose with a certain amount of self-confidence. If he has composed a number of kritis on the theme of the greatness of music and on the value of a knowledge of saṅgita s'āstra, it was because, his intensive study of musicology enabled him to correctly evaluate such knowledge. He refers to various musical authorities in the kritis: *Vidulaku mrokkeda* (Māyāmālavagauḷa rāga) and *Saṅgita nānamu* (Dhanyāsi rāga). Though the works of some of these Authorities have not come down to us, yet it is certain that he must have had access to them. It may be remembered in this connection that the contents of a number of works were remembered orally in former times. It is a pity that with the advent of printing, this capacity to memorise is gradually on the decline.

His knowledge of musicology enabled him to create many rāgas and compose splendid compositions in them. That knowledge also enabled him to define and make clear, the individualities of those rāgas which were in a somewhat nebulous condition. He was a composer with a vision. He saw into the future and laid the foundations for the further development of South Indian music along correct lines.

Tyāgarāja started his career at a time when there was a wealth of musical genius in the district of Tanjore. This district is the brightest spot on the musical map of South India. It is also the densest spot having to its credit, the largest number of lakṣhaṇakāras, musicians and composers. The number of the musical luminaries that adorned Tanjore exceeds the number of the musical

luminaries of all the other districts of South India put together. For an unbroken period of nearly three centuries (1600—1900). Tanjore has remained an important seat of music. The Nāik rulers as well as the Mahrāṭṭa Rulers were great scholars and patrons of the Art. Their courts were adorned by eminent poets, musicians and composers. Even musicians and composers from other provinces came to Tanjore to win laurels. During the time of Tyāgarāja there were as many as 360 vidvāns in Tanjore Court and each vidvān had the privilege of singing or performing in the Royal presence in the Saṅgita Mahāl (concert hall) for only one day during the year. For this annual exhibition of his talents, each musician strove his best in order to maintain his dignity and rank amongst the brother compeers. Some musicians specialised in rāgas of their choice. Those who achieved eminence in particular rāgas were dubbed with the names of the rāgas themselves, as a mark of recognition. Posterity remembers with pride such names as Tōḍi Sitārāmayya, Aṭhāṇā Appayya and Saṅkarābharaṇam Narasayya.

#### UNCHAVRITTI

Tyāgarāja lived a simple, devout life—a life inspired by the high ideals of plain living, high thinking, poverty and service to humanity. Excepting a portion of the ancestral house and some land, he had no

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‡The unique honour and privilege of singing on the New Year Day fell to the lot of Sonti Venkatasubbayya, the father of Tyagaraja's Guru.

property worth the name. He maintained his family and the large number of his disciples through *unchavritti*. In addition to the sishyas, there were a number of musicians, paṇḍits and bhāgavatars who came and stayed as his guests for varying periods, ranging from some weeks to months, to derive inspiration and spiritual solace. Tyāgarāja started for *unchavritti* once a week and what he obtained was sufficient to maintain himself, his family, his sishyas and the fluctuating number of visitors. Sometimes he was invited to perform *unchavritti bhajanas* in neighbouring places also.

The career of *unchavritti* is one of austerity, rigour, hardship and discipline. It is in this context that we have got to admire Tyāgarāja for his rigid adherence to high ideals, by refusing the tempting offer from the Ruler of Tanjore.

Incidentally it may be pointed out that *unchavritti* is one of the holiest of vrittis or careers. It is taken to by persons with a spiritual bent of mind. It blesseth him that gives and him that takes. There is nothing demeaning about *unchavritti*. *Unchavritti* bhāgavatas are not a liability on the society. They live on what is freely and willingly offered. They spend the afternoons and nights in giving religious discourses and in that manner contribute to the spiritual elevation of humanity. Every religion enjoins upon a person to part with a fraction of his earnings by way of charity. The *unchavritti* bhāgavatas were learned men and noted for their piety. They were *Satpātras* (i.e. deservingly virtuous persons) to whom the grahastas

(house-holders) gave voluntarily. When the *uchhavritti* bhāgavata went along the streets, singing the hymns of the Lord, residents from the houses on either side came out with reverence and offered him rice, dhall and other articles of food.

It is significant that in the song "*Ennāḷḷu tirigēdi*" in Mālavas'ri rāga, Tyāgarāja says that he had to gather articles from salt to camphor (an idiom which means and includes all the necessities of life) through *unchavritti*.

By the middle period of his life, his name and fame as a composer of front rank had spread far and wide. Rasikas and musical luminaries from distant places came to pay their respects to him. They told him how in far-off places, his songs were sung and how their long cherished desire to see the author of those compositions had at last been fulfilled.

One of those luminaries to visit Tyāgarāja was Gōpinātha Bhaṭṭāchārya, a musician of eminence at that time in the North. It was during his visit that Tyāgarāja sang the song in Tōḍi rāga beginning with the words "*Das'arathē! nī ruṇamu*" He says in the anupallavi, "Oh Rasika s'irōmaṇi (Rāmā)! who has made my name shine in the distant lands and to my hearty satisfaction...etc." We find the same idea echoed in his later piece "*Ī vasudha nīvaṇṭi*" in Sahānā rāga, wherein he says "Oh Lord! who has established my renown in the whole world."

Tyāgarāja was alive to the fact that his compositions were of a sterling character, that they originated from a higher source and that he was only a medium to give utterance to them. In the abovementioned piece in Tōḍi rāga, he says, "Oh God who taught me the kīrtanas which conferred prosperity and salvation." The word "*bōdhinchina*" significantly reveals the fact that those songs were just whispered into his ears. In the kriti "*Chintistunnāḍē*" in Mukhāri rāga also, there is a reference to the supreme quality of his kīrtanas.

### SVARARNAVA

That Tyāgarāja, had digested the famous work *Svarārṇava* (obtained providentially), is proved by the charaṇa of the kriti, "*Svararāgasudhārāsa*" in Saṅkarābharaṇa rāga. There he refers to himself in these terms, "This Tyāgarāja who has understood the mysteries of *Svarārṇava*." From the same song we learn that in that work, the science of music was treated of in the form of a dialogue between Śiva and Pārvatī.

In the excerpts of this work now available, we find the lakṣhaṇas given for those rāgas which we come to know of for the first time through Tyāgarāja's compositions. This work again contains the interesting s'loka :—

*Ātma madhya gata : Prāṇa :*

*Prāṇa madhya gatō dhvani :*

*Dhvani madhya gatō nāda :*

*nāda madhyē Sadāśiva :*



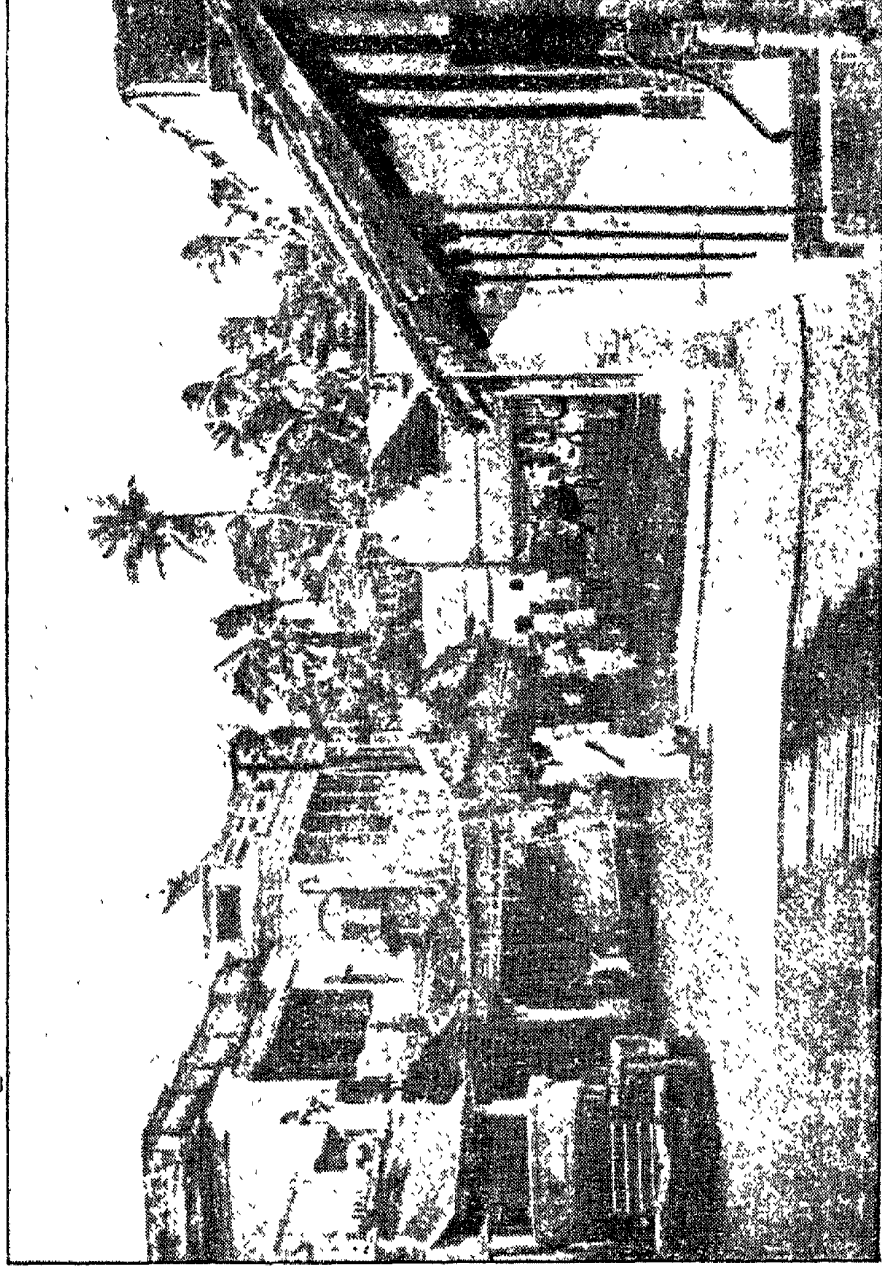
## CHAPTER IV.

SEQUEL OF THE CRISIS—FURTHER TRAVELS, AND  
RESIDENCE IN PARIS.

1620-28.

§ 18. As soon as his fevered imagination had cooled, he determined at once to produce his invention, and notes that on the 23d February (1620) he was thinking of finding a publisher; but presently he changed his intention; and this treatise, which was certainly not the *Discourse on Method*, is by Baillet suspected to have been possibly the *Olympica*, though he found this MS. in a state wholly unfit for publication. We are now able to make another suggestion. During the agitation of the previous months, Descartes had heard much of the Rosicrucians,—a hidden confraternity who were believed to have attained some mysterious key to natural knowledge apart from theology, and who were supposed to be spread all through society. A considerable literature of attack and of apology as regards this sect then occupied public interest. Baillet tells us (i. 88) all that was then known about them. In a MS. called *Cartesii liber de studio bonæ mentis ad Musæum*, Descartes con-

PLATE IV



Tirumañjana vīdhi in Tiruvaiyār — The house where Tyāgarāja lived has the pandal in front, decorated with plantain trees and festoons.

PLATE V



The temple of Prāṇatārtihara in Tiruvaiyar.  
View of the Eastern Gōpuram.

18, one Haridās (Rāmakṛṣṇa Yatindra) from Kānchipuram came to him and asked him to recite Rāma nāma 96 crores of times. Tyāgarāja took it as a command from the above and completed the sacred task in 21 years. He recited on an average 1,25000 nāmas every day. His wife also joined him in this task. During the afternoons, he used to sit in the maṇṭapa of the temple called Dakṣiṇa Kailās and carry on his Rāma nāma Japam. This temple is on the southern wing of the Panchanadis'varasvāmi Temple of Tiruvaiyār and it was in this Dakṣiṇa Kailās temple, that Appar (7th cent.) had the darshan of Lord Śiva.

India has produced eminent Rāmabhaktas like Bhadrāchalam Rāmadās, Kabīrdās and others, but not one of them is credited with having recited the name of the Lord 96 crores of times. This supreme achievement is the glory of Tyāgarāja and it is no wonder that he became the recipient of Rāmā's grace.

The reciting of 1,25000 Rāma nāma every day is a stupendous task but not impossible of achievement. It requires firmness and faith and tenacity of purpose. Those who have some experience of reciting Rāma nāma know that on an average, a person can recite about 7000 nāmas an hour.

Tyāgarāja's father himself as already mentioned on p. 14 had the upadēśa of the Tāraka mantra from the Holy Sadguru Svāmi of Marudānallūr Muṭṭ and Tyāgarāja had seen his father doing Rāma nāma āvritti.

During the course of this austere penance, Lord Śrī Rāma blessed him with Darshana many times. Pieces like 'Ēla nī daya rādū' (Aṭhāṇa rāga) and "Kanugonṭini" (Bilahari rāga) were composed by him marking such events. At the conclusion of each crore, he invariably had some concrete proof of Divine Grace.

He pays homage to this Rāmakṛṣṇa Yatindra in the third invocatory kaṇḍapadya to his opera 'Nowkā Charitram.'

One morning, Nārada, in the guise of a Sanyāsi came to Tyāgarāja's house and listened to his music. Leaving some musical works behind him, he said he will return for biksha (meal) after a bath in the river Kāvēri. Tyāgarāja waited and waited and there was no trace at all of the sage. He fasted all day. In the night the sage appeared to him in dream and revealed that he was Nārada and that he had come to present him with some musical works from which he could draw fresh light and inspiration. Tyāgarāja woke up and scanned the bundle of granthas left by the sage. *Svarārṇava* was one of the works contained therein and he was delighted to see the same. Another grantha in the bundle was *Nāradiyam*.

It is interesting to note that in Tyāgarāja's life, whenever he is in difficulty or whenever he is in need of *illumination* or guidance, a Sanyāsi invariably appears to him and leads him on to the path of light and victory.

For instance, when he was five years old, he was seized with a dire ailment which almost proved to be

fatal. His father who was disappointed with his first two sons, had pinned high hopes on his third son and when this disease overtook him he felt very sad. During the critical moment, a Sanyāsi came and told him that the boy will be alright the next day and as per the prediction, Tyāgarāja completely recovered the next day. Likewise the personage who came and gave him the *Svarārṇava* was a Sanyāsi and the personage who asked him to recite *Rāma nāma* 96 crores of times was a Sanyāsi.

### PERSONALITY

Tyāgarāja had a saintly face and an inspiring personality. He was lean and tall - about 5 feet 9 inches in height. He had a long neck and was fair-skinned. He wore a tulasi maṇi mālā round his neck. It was an inspiration and a spiritual experience for anyone to have a darśan of Tyāgarāja in his unchavritti costume.

Steeped in Rāma Bhakti, Tyāgarāja gradually rose from humanity to divinity. Luminaries like him have contributed to the elevation of India in the eyes of the world. In enunciating the dictum that one can commune with God through *nādōpāsana* or the medium of pure music, and not necessarily through hymns of praise, he has earned for himself a place amongst the world's greatest thinkers.

Tyāgarāja's life is full of interesting, inspiring and thrilling incidents. His reactions to some of the actions of his disciples, his appreciation of good music from

whichever source it emanated and his charitable attitude to those who were jealous of his eminence, all reveal to us the man - Tyāgarāja. These incidents help us to draw a correct pen picture of the psychological frame-work of the greatest composer of South India. He used dignified language even when provoked.

Tyāgarāja had the humility and simplicity characteristic of a great man. He was easily accessible to one and all. The wisdom that people acquire late in their lives, he acquired in the early period of his career itself. He established that what really mattered in this world was divine grace and all the rest were of mere ephemeral value. His answers to many human problems are characterised by straightforwardness and charity. His life has a deep moral lesson for us. The trials that he had to undergo and his emerging out of them unscathed each time, only confirm the truth of the statement, "Come, what may, as long as you adhere to the path of righteousness, God's mercy is definitely on your side—though in haste you may for the time being fail to see the purpose of God's ultimate justice."

## CHAPTER IV

### HIS ART, STYLE AND CONTRIBUTION

TYAGARAJA was an inspired composer. Most of his compositions were the product of inspiration. It will be interesting to know how his disciples readily recorded in notation those songs which flowed out of his mouth during moments of inspiration on Ēkādaśi and other sacred days. They wrote upon mango planks with steatite pencils. These planks were 18 inches long and 9 inches broad and  $\frac{1}{2}$  an inch in thickness. They were coated black with the leaves of the plant, *Bryonia Grandis*. One disciple concentrated on the Pallavi and recorded the same in notation and went to the bank of the river Kāvēri which was just a furlong off to memorise it. He did not stay for the Anupallavi lest the new music should obliterate the impression of the Pallavi. The second directed his attention to the Anupallavi and likewise left for another place to memorise it. The third wrote the Charaṇa in notation and he also left for another place to memorise it in solitude. The fourth sishya wrote the pure sāhitya, after understanding it. When another song came, another set of four disciples got ready for the purpose. The next day the disciples sat together, consolidated their notes, learnt the full pieces and submitted them to the master. The great composer, it is said, used to admire the pieces that emanated from his mouth during those inspired moments.



Tyāgarāja will long be remembered as the genius who perfected the type of composition known as the *Kṛiti*. The *Kṛiti* is the most important and the most highly evolved of the musical forms. The credit of bringing this form to perfection goes to Tyāgarāja. His *Kritis* are veritable rāga crystals and the rāga svarūpa is patent on the face of everyone of them. In his *Kritis*, we find him speaking the language of music in its purest form. The individual varieties of different *Kritis* in one and the same rāga and his *Kritis* in rāgas which have not been handled before him testify to his extraordinary creative talents.

The introduction of *Saṅgatis* as a regular integral part of a *Kṛiti* is the most outstanding feature of his music. *Saṅgatis* are variations on a musical theme and he used them for emphasising the latent meanings in the *Sāhitya* or for bringing out the rāgabhāva in bold relief. Thus his *saṅgatis* admit of the classification: *Sāhitya bhāva saṅgitis* and *Rāga bhāva saṅgatis*. In the *kṛiti Eduta nīlachite*, we find both these types of *saṅgatis*. Some *Kritis* like “*Chēra rāva dēmira*” in *Ritigaula* rāga are decorated with sets of *Saṅgatis*. The *Saṅgatis* figuring in the *Kharaharapriya* piece “*Chakkani rāja*” stand as *lakshyas* for the *Sthāya bhanjani* and *Rūpaka bhanjani* mentioned in the *Saṅgita Ratnākara*. His variations not only glide into one another in a natural manner but there is also a certain appropriateness, regularity and beauty in their sequence. Even the deletion of one *Saṅgati* or a slight change in their order will destroy the sum-total effect. The term *Kṛiti* is authoritatively used by him in his *Srīranjani* Song “*Sogasuga mṛidaṅga tāṭamu*.” In a *śiṣa padya*, paying

homage to the great bard of Tiruvaiyār, Wālājāpe ṭ Venkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar refers to Tyāgarāja as the great composer who composed different types of Kritis for the elevation of mankind.

His Kritis contain apt themes for performing *Niraval* and for developing Kalpana svaras. He showed that dignified prose was better suited to the Sāhitya of musical compositions rather than highflown poetry.

There is a logical sequence and a definite scheme underlying the progression of the music and Sāhitya of his compositions. The Pallavi is like a *Sūtra* or a theorem and contains a general statement or enunciation. The Anupallavi is like a *vritti* and is a development on the Pallavi theme. The Charaṇa is like the *bhāṣya* and constitutes the further elucidation and amplification. The piece "*Vinanāsa koni yunnānura*" in Prātāpavarali rāga can be cited as a typical instance. In the Pallavi he says "*Vinanāsa koni yunnānura*" (I am desirous of listening to, Ōh Rāmā). In the Anupallavi he further develops the idea by saying "*Manasāraga vinulavinduga*" (I am anxious to listen to with all my heart the sweet words). What those sweet words are explained in the Charaṇa "*Sitāramaṇitō*," etc.

The incident referred to here, belongs to the Uttara Rāmāyaṇa. One day Rāmā and Sītā played the game of "*Pallāṅguḥi*" in their private chamber. At the conclusion of the game, both of them had a delightful conversation. This conversation was overheard by Ānjanēya and Bharata and they feasted their ears. Tyāgarāja in his inimitable poetic style says Ōh Rāmā! I am anxious to listen to that sweet conversation with the same fervour as Bharata and Ānjanēya". The composer adds special weight to

the piece by his Saṅgatis on the phrase “Āmadhuramaina palukulu” (the sweet words) in the anupallavi.

Tyāgarāja’s Sāhityas are correct models for the mātu of musical compositions. The mellifluous flow of the language, the easy diction and the sweet sounding words succeeding one another in a natural manner endow his songs with a special charm. The songs abound in lofty thoughts, noble sentiments and homely comparisons. Plenty of sage utterances like “The life which is spent in swimming in the ocean of your devotion is the life well spent” (*Ni bhakti bhāgya sudhā*) might be culled from his compositions. The truths enshrined in the Upanishads are presented by him in a simple style and in a manner capable of being understood by the man in the street. It is for this reason that his songs are referred to with reverence as *Tyāga Brahmōpanishad*. There is an answer to every human problem in his songs. The abundance of feeling running through his compositions, the polished nature of their music and their haunting melody have endowed his songs with an additional charm. Divyanāma Kīrtanas in Sanskrit like “*Varalīla gāna lōla*” reveal his amazing command of the classical language and his extensive vocabulary.

Half of his compositions relate to the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. These songs are captivating interest. Whereas in the songs relating to the *Rāmāyaṇa*, he uses the name Rāma in the sense of the hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in his other songs he uses the same word as meaning Parabrahma. When Prahlāda addresses his prayers to Rāma, in his opera *Prahlāda Bhakti Vijayam*, Tyāgarāja was not guilty of anachronism. By Rāma, Prahlada meant only Parabrahma.

Tyāgarāja has also left behind him a few San-kshēpa Rāmāyaṇa Kīrtanas, i.e. Kīrtanas which are an epitome of the great epic. “*Vinayamu namu Kaus'ikuni*” (Saurāshṭra rāga), “*Srī Rāma Jayarāma*” (Yadukulakāmbhōji rāga) and “*Srī Raghukula*” (Hamsadhvani rāga) are examples. In some compositions like “*Vāchāma gōcharamē manasā*” he tells us some incidents in the lives of Rāma and Sīta which are not mentioned in the Vālmiki, Kamba and Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇas.

### HIS CONTRIBUTION

Tyāgarāja has composed in all the 72 Mēla rāgas. Deriving inspiration from him, composers like Pallavi Sēshayyar and others belonging to his Sishya Parampara have also composed in all the 72 mēla rāgas. We owe our knowledge of many rare rāgas to Tyāgarāja. Rāgas like Bahudāri, Chenchukāmbhōji, Dilipakam, Dēvāmṛta varshiṇi, Gambhīra vāṇi, Garuḍadhvani, Janaranjani, Kōkiladhvani, Mayūradhvani, Nabhōmaṇi, Nādatāraṅgini, Nāgasvarāvali, Navarasakannaḍa, Phalaranjani, Sāramati, Umābharaṇam, Supōshiṇi and Vijaya'srī in all of which he has composed brilliant Kritis are neither mentioned in the *Saṅgīta Ratnākara* nor any other standard work on music. His compositions in rare rāgas and in rāgas not mentioned in earlier works are a magnificent contribution to the music of India. It is possible that either he created these new rāgas himself or got clue for them from the work “*Svarārṇava*” which the sage Nārada is said to have presented to him. There is internal evidence in his Kritis to show that Tyāgarāja mastered the secrets of musical science through this work “*Svarārṇava*”.

Tyāgarāja has composed for all types of voices. Pieces like “*Nājivādhārā*” in Bilahari rāga and “*Dārini telusukonṭi*” in Suddha Sāvēri are sufficient to tax the vocal powers of the most talented singers. Many of his compositions shine with remarkable beauty when performed on instruments or by an orchestra. His Pancharatna pieces in Nāṭa, Gauḷa, Ārabhi, Śrīrāga and Varāḷi are a class by themselves.

Like the Tēvārakāras and other Saints of South India, whenever he visited a shrine in the course of his pilgrimage, he composed songs (usually five) in praise of the local deity. His *Tiruvottiyūr Pañcharatnam*, *Kōvūr Pañcharatnam*, and *Nāgaṭura Pañcharatnam* are wellknown examples. His disciple Viṇa Kuppaiyar followed in his footsteps when he composed his *Kāḷahastīsa Pañcharatnam* and *Veṅkaṭēs'a Pañcharatnam*. Tyāgarāja is the first South Indian composer to attempt pieces in Dēs'ādi tāḷas.

South Indian devotional music has been enriched by his *Divyanāma Kīrtanas* and *Utsava Sampradāya Kīrtanas* in Sanskrit and Telugu. Clothed in simple, sweet and melodious music, these songs are widely sung. Some disciples of his like, Chownā Veṅkaṭāchalapati Bhāgavatar of Ayyampeṭ were so enamoured of these compositions, that they learnt only these Kīrtanas.

Tyāgarāja has rendered signal service to Indian music by immortalising many folk tunes in his operas and devotional songs.

Tyāgarāja is a great teacher of mankind. He has embodied in his compositions all the truths enshrined in

the Upaniṣads and sacred lore. There is an answer to every human problem in his songs.

In some of his songs, Tyāgarāja depicts faithfully contemporary life, manners and customs. Students interested in the social life of his times will find in his songs useful material to draw upon.

A person may hear Tyāgarāja's compositions any number of times and each time he will feel a refreshing beauty about them. Distinguished musicians of the time sat at his feet as disciples and learnt his songs. Some disciples were with him for long periods of 20 years and even more.

### HIS OPERAS

Tyāgarāja is the father of the modern Gēya Nāṭakam or opera. Before him there were dramas and dance dramas like the Kuravañji nāṭaka, Yaksha gāna, Kathakali and the Bhāgavata-mēla-nāṭaka. Tyāgarāja knew the art and science of Dancing. He saw the magnificent dance dramas in Telugu performed in Meraṭṭūr under able guidance and direction of Meraṭṭūr Veṅkaṭarāma S'āstri. He also saw the *Pallaki Sēvā Prabandham* in Telugu (the work of Shahji Mahārājah) performed in the temple at Tiruvārūr. The idea of writing dance dramas did not appeal to him. He boldly conceived the idea of writing a pure musical drama, divorced from dance and succeeded remarkably. It is but natural that the pure opera should emerge from the dance drama in a country wherein dance was considered a part of music. His *Prahlāda Bhakti Vijayam* in 5 Acts will take about five hours to perform—the time that is required for performing Wagner's "MASTER

*SINGER*". The *Nowkā Charitram* is a shorter opera and will take about two and a half hours to perform. His operas are the product of a mature musical and poetic intellect.

The dance dramas of his time were all performed in the holy precincts of particular temples and they could not be witnessed elsewhere. Seeing the circumscribed character of the appeal of these Nritya nāṭakas, he wrote his operas which can be given as recitals and performed in any place with an art atmosphere. In an opera, the elements contributing towards rasa effects are the music, language and action besides the scenic settings.

Tyāgarāja is a gifted writer of operas. His three operas: *Prahlāda Bhakti Vijayam*, *Nowkā Charitram* and *Sītā Rāma Vijayam* in Telugu are splendid compositions and entitle him to be ranked as the greatest writer of operas. His genius as a play-wright, his powers at effective characterisation, his dramatic instinct, his literary and poetic skill, his powers of imagination and characterisation and his gifts at melody-making are fully revealed in these three works. The soliloquies put in the mouth of Prahlāda capture our hearts. His operas are ideal lakshya granthas for the topic of rāga and rasa. We also come across high-flown poetry here and there.

Tyāgarāja observes the classical unities associated with Indian operas. For example, it is a rule that the opening and the closing song of an opera should be in the same rāga and also that that rāga should be an auspicious rāga. In the *Prahlāda Bhakti Vijayam*, we have the opening song "*Srī Gaṇapatini*" in Saurāṣṭra rāga and the closing song is the universally

sung maṅgaḷam in Saurāṣṭra “*Nī nāma rūpamulaku.*” In *Nowkā Charitram*, the opening song “*Sṛṅgārinchukoni*” is in Surāṣṭi rāga and the closing song is the maṅgaḷam in Surāṣṭi rāga “*Mākulamunakiha*”. It is worthy of note that Tyāgarāja has indicated even the rāgas in which the different padyas (verses) of the operas should be sung. The musical dialogues and dvipadas in the operas are appropriately enough presented in the same dhātu (musical setting). His Chūrṇikas, Kanda padyas, Sisa padyas, Utpalamālas, Champaka mālas, Sārdūlas and Utsāhas rise to the level of high class literature. He has given life to his operas by introducing appropriate fictitious incidents and characters. All the songs in his operas bear his signature.

### SITA RAMA VIJAYAM

*Sitā Rāma Vijayam* is not so well known as the other two operas. The story of this opera relates to the *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*. The famous piece in Kāmbhōji rāga “*Mājānaki Chettabaṭṭaga*” is sung by one of the characters addressing Śrī Rāma in the strain “Oh Rāma! You attained this greatness because you married *our* Jānaki.” On the eve of Śatrugna’s departure with the horse prior to the performance of the As’vamēdha Yāga, Rāma gave his younger brother a long sermon on Yuddha Dharma (code of conduct to be observed during war): that he must not fight an enemy during night time; that he must not kill an enemy while the latter is sleeping, etc. At this Lakshmīnidhi one of the characters remarks to Rāma in a satirical manner:- “As if you yourself practised these dharmas during your Yuddha. How did you kill Vāli? What is the justification for killing Tāṭaki?” etc. The portions relating to this episode in the opera form delightful reading.



## PRAHLADA BHAKTI VIJAYAM

The *Prahlāda Bhakti Vijayam* is the longest of his three operas. It consists of 5 acts. In all 45 songs figure in this opera. Some of the songs are in the Kṛiti style and some in the style of Divyanāma Kīrtanas. There are also beautiful kanda padyas, śiśa padyas, utpalamālas, champakamālas and dvipadas. The prose passages here and there explain the connecting links in the story. The famous chūrṇika "*Jayatu jayatu sakala nigamāgama*" describing the greatness of Vaiṣṇoṭha figures in Act II of this opera.

The name of the opera is *Prahlāda Bhakti Vijayam* and not Prahlāda Bhakta Vijayam. It is the triumph of Prahlāda's Bhakti that is significantly sought to be conveyed in this opera and not the life-story of Prahlāda. Appropriately enough, Tyāgarāja has introduced many fictitious incidents not found in the original story, *Prahlāda Chari-tram*. It is open to a poet to introduce in a story, fictitious incidents for the purpose of heightening the interest in the play and for subserving the purpose, he has in view. Bhāva puṣṭi, Artha puṣṭi and beautiful music are abundantly seen in this opera.

Throughout this opera, Prahlāda refers only to *Rāma*. The significance of this can be understood only when it is remembered that to Tyāgarāja, Rāma was Parabrahma. It is not, that the composer was unaware of the fact that Rāmāvatāra took place after Narasimhāvatāra. Through Prahlāda, Tyāgarāja tells us what is true bhakti and what will be the reactions of an ideal bhakta to certain trials and ordeals. Bot hin the introductory dvipada and in the phalaśruti at the end, he refers to himself as the son of Rāmabrahmam.

Tyāgarāja has been a shrewd observer of men and human foibles. Not only does he reveal this in the opera but also gives his own views, concerning some of the controvertial problems besetting our society.

The opera opens with the invocatory verses in praise of Vishvaksēna, Sarasvati, Nārada, Tūsi Dās, Purandara Dās and Bhadrāchala Rāmadās. There is a significance in his praising Nārada. Apart from the fact that he believed that the Sanyāsi who came and gave him the "*Svarāṇava*" was Nārada, it may be pointed out that whenever Tyāgarāja was in distress, a Sanyāsi significantly appears before him and leads him on to the path of light and brings relief to him.

The song "*Srī Gaṇapati*" in Saurāṣṭra rāga is the Gaṇēsa Kīrtana for this play. In the maṅgaḷam "*Nī nāma rūpamulaku*" (Saurāṣṭra rāga) figuring at the end of the opera, it may be noted that in the charaṇa 'Prahlēda Nāradādi Bhaktulu', the name Prahlēda occurs even before Nārada. This shows that to Tyāgarāja, Prahlēda was the greatest bhakta, the world has produced. The second song "*Vāsudevāyāni*" in Kalyāṇi rāga is sung by the Dauvārika. The story now begins.

### THE STORY

Prahlēda in serpent bondage is thrown into the sea. The Sea-King feels honoured that the great Prahlēda Yōgi has come to him. He welcomes him and looks to his comfort. Garuḍa is prayed for. He comes. Immediately Prahlēda

becomes freed from the serpent bondage. Prahlāda thanks Samudra Rāja in the song “*Varidhi nīku*” (Tōḍi rāga) and requests him to explain the mārḡa (path) for attaining communion with Hari.

In Act II, Prahlāda prays incessantly. “*Vandanamu Raghunandana*” in Sahāna rāga, couched in the Divyanāma style is sung by Prahlāda. This beautiful prayer song is noteworthy for its s’abdālankāra. Nārada appears on the scene and describes to Prahlāda the greatness of Vaikuṇṭha. He also informs him that Hari was just preparing to leave Vaikuṇṭha to come and give darṣan to him (Prahāda).

At this juncture, a beautiful śīsa padya describes the humorous dialogue that took place between Hari and Lakshmi in Vaikuṇṭha.

In Act III, there is the beautiful svagata daru (musical soliloquy) “*Ennaga manasuku rāni*” in Nīlāmbari rāga. Says Prahlāda; “What is the use of the eye that is not able to see Hari and what is the use of the pupil within that eye? What is the use of the nālīka (tongue) that is not able to sing the praise of God and of what earthly use is the sūtramālīka (the sacred red thread tied round the upper right arm of Bhāgavatas, initiated into the Bhāgavata cult)? Hari comes and gives darṣana and Prahlāda is drowned in the sea of celestial bliss.

In Act IV, in order to proclaim the greatness of Prahlāda’s devotion, Hari subjects him to some tests. Says Hari “Oh Prahlāda! Ask any boon, I shall grant thee”. Prahlāda undeterred replies beautifully in the song “*Vārija nayana*” (Kēdāragauḷa rāga). Hari praises Prahlāda’s *nija bhakti*.

The maṅgaḷam in Ghaṇṭā rāga "*Jaya maṅgaḷam*" concludes the IV Act.

In Act V, Hari tells Prahlāda that he (Hari) must go back to Vaikuṇṭha. In order to forestall him, Hari however tells in a beautiful śīsa padyam that He delights in living in the hearts of his bhaktas. Prahlāda movingly replies in the song in Rītigauḷa rāga "*Nannu viḍichi kaḍalakura*"—Do not leave me Oh Lord! Hari however disappears. "What a sinner have I become" moans Prahlāda in the song "*Enta pāpi naiti*" in Gauḷipantu rāga. Tyāgarāja in a touching śīsa padya "*Dhanavantuḍaivenuka*" recounts what are the unbearable miseries in this world. Prahlāda repeatedly sings of God in a very moving manner. Hari comes back and gives his darshan to Prahlāda, this time in the company of Lakshmi. Prahlāda in great joy prays of Hari to come to his abode.

The opera concludes with a beautiful phalaśruti (benedictory verse) in Sanskrit.

### NOWKA CHARITRAM

The first compositions of Tyāgarāja to be printed were his operas. The bare text of the opera, *Nowkā Charitram* was first printed in 1873 and then again in the years 1885 and 1895. Later on it was included in the complete works of Tyāgarāja. The *Nowkā Charitram* was first printed with songs in notation in 1939. There are manuscript copies of this opera in the Tanjore Sarasvati Mahāl Library and the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras. In one Manuscript, the rāgas to be used for singing the several padyas are given. The *Nowkā Charitram* is the most popular amongst his operas.

In the *Nowkā Charitram* Tyāgarāja has shown his talent for conceiving musical dialogues and his capacity to compose tunes in rāgas appropriate to the situation. His capacity for the portrayal of rasas as well as the shades thereof are revealed in a marked manner in this opera.

The *Nowkā Charitram* is an opera in one Act. It consists of five scenes. It tells the story of a boat excursion on the River Jumnā, the party consisting of Kṛṣṇa and 20 gōpis. To witness the performance of *Nowkā Charitram* is a treat for the eye and a feast to the ear. The story is of captivating interest. It is a creation of Tyāgarāja's imagination. We know of *Rāsa kṛīḍā* and *Jala kṛīḍā*, but *Nowkā kṛīḍā* has no basis in the Bhāgavatam. Kṛṣṇa in the play is a boy of about 7 years of age. The description of the River Jumnā, the Gōkulam and the Gōpis are as vivid as they are picturesque. The navarasas as also shades of some of the rasas are depicted in the opera.

### THE STORY

The opera starts with invocatory verses to Gaṇeśa, Sarasvatī and the great poets. In the third Kandapādyā, Tyāgarāja pays his homage to Rāmakṛṣṇa Yātīndra who asked him to recite the 96 crores of Rāma nāma and by completing which Tyāgarāja was able to earn the grace of Rāma. The play starts with the Gōpis setting out one evening from their homes. After some time, they hear Kṛṣṇa's flute and charmed by it they go in search of him. They find him and in great joy take him along. The opening song *Sṃgārīñchukoni* describes how they went singing and dancing aimlessly, surfeited with pleasure.

Ultimately they come to the banks of the Jumnā. A beautiful description of the river, the sand-dunes on the river, the red-coloured lotus, the parrots and the delightful follow.

They now see a silvery shining boat studded with gems of alluring beauty. The thought strikes them that they can go on an excursion in the boat. They discuss among themselves whether to take Kṛṣṇa, the boy along with them.

When Kṛṣṇa hears them saying that he is a boy, inexperienced in aquatic sports, he taunts them by saying "Don't you know my prowess? Do not the *Vēdas* proclaim that without me not even a trifle can move in this world?" etc. The dialogue that follows between Kṛṣṇa and the Gōpis is of interest.

The Gōpis were still undecided. They feared that Kṛṣṇa would again play some mischief and land them in an awkward situation. They recall in song 4 all his previous pranks, and in song 5 Kṛṣṇa replies them.

The Gōpis finally agree to take Kṛṣṇa with them and the luxury boat starts on its journey.

It was a pleasant evening. How the charming damsels spent the time on the boat in merriment, singing and dancing is recounted in songs 6, 7 and 8. Tyāgarāja must have made many boat trips across the Kāvēri river. In his days there was no Mēttūr dam to control the waters of the river Kāvēri. Tyāgarāja therefore writes with a certain first hand knowledge of boat trips on rivers. The story however takes place on the river Jumnā.

The Gōpis were inwardly feeling joyous that their long-cherished desire of having an opportunity to enjoy the spiritual company of the Divine child Kṛṣṇa, had come to pass. Kṛṣṇa took as many forms as the number of Gōpis on the boat and played with each of them. Each Gōpi thought that Kṛṣṇa was playing only with her. This kind of illusion was created by Him. Drunk with ecstasy, they began to sing "How fortunate are we to make a trip in this boat in the divine company of Kṛṣṇa!". Kṛṣṇa too complimented them on their extraordinary charm and beauty. This made them remark: "All people including Gods are after all victims to women's beauty! Oh Kṛṣṇa! you are no exception to this".

Kṛṣṇa suggested that they may ply the oars on the western side of the boat. The shrewd Gōpis read an intrigue in this suggestion; because by plying the oars on the western side, the boat will drift into midstream instead of running parallel to the bank. "Enough of your pranks Ōh Kṛṣṇa!" exclaimed the Gōpis. The climax is gradually worked up. The Gōpis reach the peak of pride in the song in Dēvagāndhāri rāga. Dēvagāndhāri rāga is very useful for depicting the feeling of pride and conceit arising out of an undue awareness and excessive consciousness of one's beauty and charm.

The Gōpis totally forgot that there was one supreme controlling force above. Kṛṣṇa by his māyā caused a storm. It increased in fury and intensity. The situation was further aggravated by blinding lightning and terrific thunder. To add to their misery, the boat sprang a leak and water began to rush in. The proud Gōpis got unnerved. They lamented and appealed to Kṛṣṇa for help. Pitch darkness enveloped the place and they lost all sense of direction. Their sorrow was two fold—that not only were they finding

a watery grave for themselves but also that they had brought Kṛṣṇa to this predicament. They prayed to Jumnā to save at least Kṛṣṇa. The songs in Ghaṇṭā and Punnāgavarāli rāgas that depict their plight are very moving. Kṛṣṇa taunted them for having brought him to this unhappy situation. The pride of the Gōpis now vanished like snow before the Sun. They surrendered themselves unto the Lord. Kṛṣṇa asked them to close their eyes and pray steadfastly. They did so. Shortly afterwards they happily found that the boat had come back again to the place from whence they started. The Gōpis in great joy organised a colourful procession and went back to their homes in the company of Kṛṣṇa. The opera is concluded with the maṅgalaṁ "*Māṅkula munakiha*" and a phalaśruti or a benediction verse.

Just as a Tyāgarāja Kṛiti can be rendered on an instrument and still enjoyed in full, though the instrument cannot reproduce the sāhitya, the *Nowkā Charitram* can be given a recital and still enjoyed, though not acted. For producing the *Nowkā Charitram* in a proper manner, one requires a Theatre with a revolving stage. The superior character of its music and sāhitya help one to enjoy it thoroughly even when given as a *Gēya charitram*. There is classical music of the heavy, medium and light types in this opera.

Through *Nowkā Charitram*, Tyāgarāja wanted to communicate the supreme teaching to mankind, that there is one Eternal force—ever guiding the destinies of man. If one becomes oblivious to it, trouble starts.

While the *Prahlāda Bhakti Vijayam* was conceived with the background of pure, unalloyed bhakti, the *Nowkā Charitram* was conceived with the background of sṅgāra, leading to bhakti.



## GROUP KRITIS

*Group kritis* are a chain of compositions on a particular theme. They are of interest from the academic and entertainment point of view. They serve to mirror to us certain aspects of the genius of a composer which often go unnoticed. It is given only to a few composers to compose group kritis. The number of individual pieces constituting a group may be five or nine.

Of the composers of group kritis adorning the pages of South Indian Musical History may be mentioned, Tyāgarāja, Muthusvāmi Dīkṣitar, (*Pañchalinga sthala kritis*, *Nava-graha kritis* and *Navavarana kritis*), Syāma Śāstri (*Navaratna mālīka* or 9 kritis in praise of the Deity Mīnākṣi of Madura), Svāti Tirunāl (*Navarātri kīrtanās*) and Viṇa Kuppayyar (*Kālahastīśa Pañcharatnam* and *Veṅkaṭēśa Pañcharatnam*—5 kritis each in praise of Kālahastīśa and Veṅkaṭēśvara). The *Pañcharatna varṇas* of Kārvēṇnagar Gōvindasāmayya and the *Vijayarāghava Pañcharatna* (5 Padas) of Kṣētrajña may also be referred to in this connection.

Tyāgarāja occupies an honoured place amongst the composers of group kritis. He is the greatest and the most prolific composer of this form. His poetic skill, his gifts at melody, his capacity to wield the language of music, the fecundity and exuberance of his musical imagination are all revealed in an amazing manner in his group kritis. One is easily impressed with their *Saigita mādhyā* and *Sāhitya bhāva*. Tyāgarāja belongs to that order of composers who, like stars, shine for ever. The occasional departures from the accepted rules of poetic composition and the occurrence

of misra samāsas and peculiar usages are to be justified from the point of view of poetic licence and local usage. His group kritis are characterized by emotional glow. Brief notes on some of his group kritis are given here.

The *Pañcharatnam* (five gems) in the ghanā rāgas: Nāṭa, Gauḷa, Ārabhi, Śrīrāga and Varāli is Tyāgarāja's most scholarly contribution to South Indian music. There is nothing to surpass them either from the point of view of richness of musical conception or the flowing character of their sāhitya. His talent for conceiving melodies of variegated beauty, interwoven with phrases of sparkling rhythmical designs is seen clearly in these pieces. How even rāgas of admittedly limited scope like Gauḷa become major rāgas in his hands, is seen in a patent manner. This precious composition has earned for him universal admiration. It has found a prominent place in the list of songs sung during the morning of the Annual festival day of the Ārādhana Mahōtsavam in Tiruvaiyār (Tanjore District) for years. All the five pieces are appropriately enough in Ādi tāla, the time-measure which easily lends itself for elaborate treatment. Tyāgarāja took delight in singing these 5 pieces during his Unchāvritti.

This *Ghāṇarāga Pañcharatnam* belongs to his middle period. Two things synchronised and jointly paved the way for the emergence of this composition.

Firstly, there was the criticism by some in his time that he was writing light poetry. The age of Tyāgarāja was one of intense specialization in creative music—Rāga ālāpāna, Tāna, Pallavi and Svara kalpana. Many vidvāns failed to catch immediately the musical significance of his numerous kritis.

Secondly, some of his disciples desired their master to compose *tāna varṇas* which might incidentally be used as vocalizes. The great composer of Tiruvaiyār as a consequence planned to compose long compositions in the *tāna* style. The length of each composition incidentally gave him the needed scope to exercise his poetic and musical gifts. The *Ārabhi Pañcharatna*, *Sādhinchenē* was evidently the first of his creations in this direction. It is typically in the style of a *tāna varṇa* with the eṭṭugaḍa pallavi, *Samayāniki*. The last charaṇa, *Sadbhaktula* of this pañcharatna reminds us of the anubandham (coda), a feature of the *tāna varṇas* of the 18th century. The *S'rīrāga Pañcharatna*: *Endarō mahānubhāvulu* was next composed. There is no aṅga corresponding to the eṭṭugaḍa pallavi here but the anubandham *Prēmamuppiri* is here. Let it be noted that the anubandhams in both these pieces are sung only with the *sāhitya* and not as *svara sāhityas*. The other three compositions in this group in *Nāṭa*, *Gauḷa* and *Varāḷi* have neither the eṭṭugaḍa pallavi nor the anubandha.

The *Nāṭa rāga Pañcharatnam* (*Jagadhānanda kāraka*) noted for the dignity of the dhātu and mātu took the critics of his time by storm. These five compositions serve to reveal the depth of his learning and his gifts in Samskr̥t and Telugu. To the student of *rāga* and *rasa*, these compositions are monumental examples to show how such feelings as rapture, self-introspection, prudence, admiration, sustained joy and humility resulting from the recognition of greatness in others could be effectively portrayed by particular *rāgas* and special phrases in them.

The anubandhams in the *Ārabhi* and *S'rīrāga* pieces bear his signature. The plural mudra charaṇas in the *Nāṭa*, *Pañcharatna* are to be attributed to the fact that the

composer himself added them later on. To establish their authenticity he introduced his signature in those additional charaṇas.

The Pañcharatnas have a powerful appeal. A high degree of technical skill is required to render them.

*Kōvūr Pañcharatnam*, *Tiruvottiyūr Pañcharatnam*, *Nāgapuri* (Negapatam) *Pancharatnam* and *Srīraṅga Pañcharatnam* are each a set of five kritis in praise of the presiding deities of the respective shrines. The first two Pañcharatnas were composed during the course of his historic pilgrimage to Kāñchīpuram, Tirupati and other places.

### KIRTANA SATAKA

This is a chain of one hundred kīrtanas on a connected theme and this is referred to in the Kṛiti, *Aparādhāmulanorva* (Rasāvali rāga) by the composer.

### SATARAGARATNAMALIKA

This is another set of 100 devotional songs composed in a 100 different rāgas and offered by the composer as a garland to Hari. When he completed it, he composed the song *Rāgaratnamālīkachē* in Rītigauḷa rāga and in great joy calls the bhaktas to see Hari bedecked with his *Satarāgaratnamālīka*. This work is also referred to in his subsequent kṛiti, *Ēlāvatāramettukōṇṭivo* in Mukhāri rāga. He says in the charaṇa with some self-confidence "Oh Rāmā! Is it for..... blessing Tyāgarāja who has composed the *Satarāgaratnamālīka* that you took avatār in this world?"

### HIS STYLE

Tyāgarāja's style is simple, homely, beautiful and charming. It requires a genius to write a simple style. The *Bhagavad gīta* is in simple language and yet contains the loftiest thoughts and expounds the highest truths of Indian philosophy. So too, Tyāgarāja adopted a style which at once appeals to the scholar and the lay person. He has followed Vālmīki in this respect. Tyāgarāja's style captivates not merely the upper ten thousand in the society but also the ordinary listener. A person who is inclined or is in a mood to sing, will burst forth into a song of Tyāgarāja, although he might have learnt the compositions of many other composers. That is the proof of the great composer's attractive and captivating style. The great composer adopted this style, because he wanted to speak to the humanity at large. The rāga bhāva floats on the surface of his melodies like cream. In his compositions there is no need to search for the individuality of a rāga or requisition a musical microscope for the purpose. The rāga bhāva is lustrously patent at every part of his composition. In his compositions, he speaks the language of music in the purest form. The haunting beauty of his melodies is to no small extent due to their refreshing and flowing style. The balanced presentation of pure notes and graced notes is an outstanding feature of his compositions. Compositions overloaded with gamakas and technical beauties leave a feeling of too-much-ness. Tyāgarāja realised that graces in compositions are best enjoyed only when they are in the midst of plain notes. Madhyamakāla (medium tempo) was Tyāgarāja's favourite tempo. In a few Kritis like *Ō Raṅga sāyi* (Kāmbhōji rāga) he has worked up a grand, majestic and learned style. From the point of view of *rasa bhāva*, Tyāgarāja's compositions are compared to the drākṣa

rasa. The grapes taste sweet the moment they are put in the mouth. It is all juice and no chaff. Many composers of the post-Tyāgarāja period like Paṭṇam Subrahmaṇya Ayyar (1845-1902) drew inspiration from his compositions and adopted his style. The easy and understandable style of Tyāgarāja is the chief cause of the wide popularity of his compositions. Kritis like *Entarānitana* (Harikāmbhōji), *Evāri māṭa* (Kāmbhōji), *Sāntamu lēka* (Sāma) and *Koluva-marēgada* (Tōḍi) are typical examples of his style.

Pioneer artists like Tyāgarāja set up musical standards for all times. The polished nature of his music, the sublimity of his Sāhitya, the homely comparisons, the beauty of the language employed by him, the amazing richness of his musical conception and the abundance of feeling running through his compositions have been responsible for his being ranked as the star of the first magnitude in the firmament of South Indian music. His songs please the cultured as well as the uncultured: the initiated as well as the uninitiated. His compositions will for ever be remembered by posterity with pride and zeal. Mānambhchāvaḍi Veṅkaṭasubbayyar in his song "*Svāmiki sari*" (Dēvagāndhāri), Tiruvottiyūr Tyāgayyar in his song "*Tyāgarāja Svāmi Guruni*" (Kharaharapriya) and Rāmnād Śrīnivāsa Ayyaṅgār in his song "*Sadguru-svāmi*" (Ritigaula) and Wālājāpeṭ Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāga-vatar in his Maṅgalāṣṭakam "*Śrīmad Kākarla Vamsābdi*" have paid homage to the great composer in glowing terms.

## CHAPTER V

### TYAGARAJA AND BHAJANA

WITH Tyāgarāja, a fresh chapter in the history of Bhajana begins in South India. He made this democratic form of worship more popular and appealing, by laying equal emphasis on the musical and devotional rendering of sacred songs. He also bridged the gulf that was threatening to develop between the bhāgavatas and saṅgīta vidvāns.

Since the days of Tāllapākam Chinnayya (15th century) the Bhajana as a form of group worship took deep root in the spiritual life of South India. Every temple came to have a Bhajana party attached to it and Bhajanas came to be performed on Ēkādaśī and other sacred days. It must of course have taken a century or more, for the detailed rituals and sequences of the items to get evolved.

Any one who has attended a bhajana knows that there are two principal divisions therein : Pūrva bhāga and Uttara bhāga. The pūrva bhāga begins with a Nāmāvalī and is followed by the Tōḍaya maṅgaḷam. Then a Guru Kīrtana, an Aṣṭapadi and Taraṅgam are sung. Songs in praise of Gaṇapati, Kumāra, Āñjanēya, Sarasvati, Paramēśvara and Pārvati are next sung. This is followed by the upachāra Kīrtana. Songs in praise of the Iṣṭa Dēvata (Rāma or Kṛṣṇa) are then sung. This marks the conclusion of the first half and the second half then begins. The Divyanāma Saṅkīrtanam

and the Utsava sampradāyam are the two main divisions of the *uttara bhāga*. Distinguished visitors who may be present at a *bhajana* will have their opportunity to sing just before the *uttara bhāga* commences.

During the *Divyanāma saṅkīrtanam*, the lamp near the Deity is removed and placed in the centre of the Hall and the *Bhāgavatar* (leader) along with select devotees makes *pradakṣiṇams* round the lamp, slowly, singing *Divyanāma saṅkīrtanams* (special sacred songs composed for the purpose). At the conclusion of the *Divyanāma saṅkīrtanam*, the lamp is replaced in its original position near the Deity or Picture as the case may be. The *Ḍolōtsavam* next begins. The *Bhajana*, when performed in the orthodox *paddhati* will occupy about seven hours, roughly four hours for the *pūrva bhāga* and three hours for the *uttara bhāga*. This *paddhati* had been evolved by the time of *Bādhendra sadguru svāmi* (18th century) and had since been widely followed in South India.

Tyāgarāja's *Ēkādasī bhajanas* were moulded rigorously after the orthodox pattern. The composer used to sing his own *Divyanāma Kīrtanas* and *Utsava sampradāya Kīrtanas*, for the purpose. In the *Pūrva bhāga* of the *bhajana*, his classical *kritis* teeming with brilliant *saṅgatis* and technical beauties were either sung by him or his *śiṣyas*. The outstanding feature of Tyāgarāja's *bhajanas* was the confluence of the æsthetic element and the spiritual element in a happy amalgum. Tyāgarāja's *bhajanas* were attended by hundreds of people. These included *Saṅgīta vidvāns*, *Paṇḍits*, *Bhāgavatas*, *Ascetics*, *Rājahs*, *Zamīndārs* and the common people. All of them derived spiritual solace by *s'ravaṇam* *i.e.* listening. The *saṅgīta vidvāns* were thrilled



by<sup>1</sup> the captivating music of his compositions. The paṇḍits and the bhāgavatas were inspired by the lofty ideas contained in them. The Rājahs, Zamīndārs and the common people were touched by the spiritual content of the songs. The entire congregation was moved to spiritual heights and every one felt the chastening influence of Tyāgarāja's bhajanas. Every Ēkādaśī bhajana registered at least three or four new Kritis. They emanated from the mouth of the composer during his moments of spiritual and musical exaltation.

Prior to Tyāgarāja's time, the Bhāgavatar, who had been initiated into the '*Bhāgavata cult*' with the presentation of the *sutra* (the sacred thread tied round the upper part of the right arm as the insignia of his status as a Bhāgavata) was rarely a musician of rank. The musicians who were too proud of their attainments did not look upon the bhāgavata with the respect due to him. The bhāgavatar who was too deeply engrossed in his spiritual greatness in turn looked upon the vidvān with a sort of indifference and sometimes even with contempt. This schism between the bhāgavataṣ and saṅgīta vidvāns became very pronounced in course of time. Tyāgarāja came at the right time to bridge this gulf. The proud vidvān had to bow down before Tyāgarāja, the great composer and joined him in his bhajanas whether performed at home or in the streets. The street bhajanas included his Unchavritti bhajanas and bhajanas undertaken during the Sapta sthānam festival of Tiruvaiyār. The bhāgavatar was indirectly influenced by Tyāgarāja to look upon music not as something which had a mere pleasant appeal but, as a serious art which when studied and cultivated properly led one to taste the nectar of spiritual bliss. According to the bhāgavata tradition,

mere recital of the name of Lord and his Kalyāṇa guṇas was sufficient as long as it was done with a purity of mind. Tyāgarāja went a step further and said that the goal of spiritual bliss was hastened when this recital of the name of the Lord and his Kalyāṇa guṇas was coupled with the discipline of singing to śruti śuddha, svara śuddha and laya śuddha. Thus he imported a fresh vitality into the Bhajana movement.

Tyāgarāja will long be remembered for the masterly way in which he brought the saṅgīta vidvān and the bhāgavata together and made them understand each other. He emphasized that when a bhakti rachana was made to emerge through the stream of pure music, the effect was doubly great.

## CHAPTER VI

### TYAGARAJA - AN INCARNATION OF VALMIKI

IT is traditionally handed down that Tyāgarāja is an Incarnation of Vālmiki. The Utsava patrikas relating to the Anniversary celebrations of the great composer invariably refer to him as an Avatār of Vālmiki. A question that may be legitimately asked is, whether, apart from the oral tradition, there is any internal evidence in his compositions to support this view. Luckily for us there are such internal evidences. Reference to some of them may be made here.

In the song in Asāvēri rāga, *Ēṇanikō janminchitinanai*, the composer says "Oh Rāma! Do you not yourself know the purpose for which I am born in this world? Vālmiki and other sages have sung of you. But will my thirst be quenched? Thus he fortifies himself and says by implication that he is going to sing Rāma Charita according to his own genius. This is one of his early period compositions and composed before he began regularly composing on the theme of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. In the song "*Dayajūchuṭa ḷidi vḷara*" (Gānavaridhi rāga) composed during the closing day of his life, He says "Oh Dasarathi! I have fulfilled the task which you assigned to me in a steady manner and with all my heart. It is time for you to take me back." Thus Tyāgarāja avers that he has completed the task of composing Kīrtanas on the

story of the Rāmāyaṇa including the portions relating to the Uttara Kāṇḍa.

The song “*Evarani nīṇṇayinṇirirū*” (Dēvāṃṭavarṣiṇi rāga) furnishes an important clue. In the charaṇa of this song, Tyāgarāja says :—

S'iva mantramunaku - *ma* jivamu Mā  
dhava mantramunaku - *Rā* jivamu - Ī  
vivaramu telisina ghanulaku mrokkeḍa  
vitarāṇa guṇa S'rī Tyāgarājārchita ||

i.e. that ‘*ma*’ is the significant syllable in the S'iva mantra and ‘*ra*’ is the significant syllable in the Mādhava mantra and these two syllables together (by inference) constitute the name ‘Rāma.’ The syllables when read in the order of the given sequence will result in only ‘*marā*’ and not Rāma. If the composer wanted to give the name correctly, he could as well have composed as follows :—

Harimantramunaku *Ra* jivamu - mā  
Haramantramunaku *ma* jivamu - ...Ī  
Vara rahasyamunu nerigina vāriki  
Vandana monarcheda ! Tyāgarājārchita ! ||

The significant point is that when the sage came to Vālmiki, who was only then a hunter he asked him to recite “*marā marā*” which of course after the first letter will sound as Rāma Rāma.

In the life of Tyāgarāja, it is a sage in the person of Rāmakṛṣṇa Yatindra that came to him and asked him to recite the name of Rāma, 96 crores of times. In the history of India's religious literature, Tyāgarāja is the only Saint

who is reputed to have recited Rāma nāma 96 crores of times. As already mentioned, he took 21 years to complete this task and no wonder he earned the grace of Rāma.

The *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa* is not a complete chronicle of all that took place in the life of Rāma. Vālmiki did not accompany S'rī Rāma as a private secretary to chronicle the incidents in his life. He wrote the famous epic out of inspiration and it stands to reason that some of the episodes left out by him might have suggested themselves to later and equally devout writers of the Rāma Charita.

In Tyāgarāja's compositions, we come across some interesting episodes in the life of Rāma, not mentioned by Vālmiki, Tuḷasi Dās and Kambar. One such episode is furnished in the charaṇa of the song :

“*Vāchāma gōcharamē manasā*” (Kaikavas'i Rāga).

At the commencement of the forest life, Rāma, Sīta and Lakṣmaṇa came to a jungle wherein the chamara mrigams (yak) were roaming about. Sīta saw one such animal and was very much enamoured of its attractive tail. She desired to possess it as a memento of her forest life. The moment the idea arose in her mind, Rāma got scent of it and in his excessive anxiety to please her, who had never known what forest life was, he immediately sent a bāṇam to cut the tail of the animal. But when Rāma bāṇam came near the animal, the animal acquired tattvajñāna. (Who will not get tattvajñāna, when Rāma bāṇam comes?) The animal argued within itself, “If I lose my tail, I will become an object of mockery in this world! Why not I give myself to Rāma bāṇam? I am sure to attain mokṣa by that act.”

So arguing, the animal, as the bāṇam came near to cut its tail, immediately swerved round and showed its neck to it. Rāma who saw this from a distance, was immediately taken aback. He argued within himself "Even for the sake of my beloved Sita, I should not kill an animal. Ahimsa is the greatest of dharmas." But Rāma bāṇam cannot go in vain. So immediately Rāma sent another bāṇam to neutralize the effect of the previous bāṇam and thus gave prāṇa dānam (life) to the animal).

*Kāḷala nērchina* (Dīpaka Rāga).

On the occasion of Rāmā's Paṭṭābhiṣēkam, various dānas (presents) had to be made to virtuous people, not only as part of the coronation ceremonies but also to get the Emperor freed of the sins committed by him in the course of his battle with Rāvaṇa. The tila dānam (present of sesame) also had to be made. (In India it is considered mean for a person to receive tila dānam and usually only very poor and uncultured people will receive this dānam). In order to induce a satpātra to receive the tila dānam, Vasiṣṭha announced that a lump of gold will be given to the person who volunteered to receive the tila dānam. Even this bait of gold did not meet with the response for some time.

One Siṅgara Muni was living at the outskirts of Ayōdhya, at the time. He was poor and was spending his time in penance and meditation. His wife who heard the tempting offer broadcast by the beat of tom-tom (daṇḍōra), beseeched her husband to volunteer to receive the gift and said that thereby they could lead a life of luxury and joy. Her husband became angry at her request and furiously remarked "Do you want me to lose all my spiritual attainments for the

sake of this wretched gold" "No Lord!" She meekly replied "After all S'rī Rāma is the Supreme Lord—incarnate in this world. After receiving the dāna, please look at him. The darṣan of the Chakravarti will be sufficient to neutralize the evils accruing to you by receiving tila dānam". Siṅgara Muni caught the sense of her remark and sent word to the Palace that he was prepared to come and receive the tila dānam. When the news spread that Siṅgara Muni had offered to receive tila dānam, people were talking amongst themselves "What! Has the Kaliyuga already dawned! It is a thousand pities that a person of Siṅgara Muni's spiritual eminence should have succumbed to the influence of gold and descended to this level!"

The sage Vasiṣṭa, in the meantime sensed the intentions of Siṅgara Muni and his wife. (It is a rule that a person who receives tila dānam should not, after receiving the gift look at the giver). So he arranged for a curtain which by some device would come down immediately after the dānam was made and prevent Siṅgara Muni from looking at S'rī Rāma.

On the particular day, Siṅgara Muni came to the palace. When the time came for the tila dānam, he went near the special platform. S'rī Rāma, gave the dānam to the accompaniment of the appropriate mantras and as the process was completed, the curtain came down as if by an electric action. S'rī Rāma as well as the courtiers were taken by surprise. When Siṅgara Muni looked up to see S'rī Rāma, he found to his dismay, only the curtain. He cursed himself at not having the darṣan of the Chakravarti and retraced his steps slowly. In the meantime, the gold had gone to the house of Siṅgara Muni and his wife who was in great joy prepared herself to receive her husband. When she found him coming with

tears in his eyes, she was taken aback. "I have lost all my tapas and tējas by listening to your tempting advice" exclaimed Siṅgara Muni. She never anticipated this kind of development and became plunged in sorrow. After a while she recovered and said to her husband, "My Lord! What has happened cannot be helped. I have a suggestion to offer. On the concluding day of the coronation festivities, S'rī Rāma will come in procession in a chariot. The procession will be passing the corner near our hut. Please stand at the time near the corner Tree and as soon as the chariot comes there, please go near S'rī Rāma and have his darṣan."

Siṅgara Muni without food and water waited anxiously for the day and hour of the procession. As the procession came near the hut's corner on that day, he threw himself in front of S'rī Rāma and had his darṣan. Immediately he regained all his spiritual greatness and tējas. S'rī Rāma remarked on that occasion "After all you have received the tila dānam and so you had to suffer for this short time. Now you are rid of all that and I bless you."

Siṅgara Muni felt very happy and returned home. He did not even touch the gold sent from the Palace.

Tyāgarāja says in this Kṛiti, "Did Siṅgara Muni enjoy the gold that he got? Was Vibhīṣaṇa able to take Raṅganātha to Laṅka? Things take place as previously ordained."



## CHAPTER VII

### LUMINARIES WHO VISITED TYAGARAJA

ILLUSTRIOUS persons of the time, including poets, composers, musicians, ascetics and nobles visited Tyāgarāja to have a glimpse of the great man who was pouring forth his musical thoughts in the never exhausting stream of Kritis. Some of them stayed as his guests for days and some for weeks. A few of those luminaries have recorded the spiritual thrill and exaltation experienced by them by listening to his Kritis. Some of those visits also occasioned compositions whose sāhityas contain evidences of those visits. The manner in which Tyāgarāja received these luminaries, the conversations he had with them, all serve to throw light on the great composer.

### TUMU NARASIMHA DASA

Tūmu Narasimha Dāsa was one of the prominent composers of devotional songs in Telugu and Sanskrit. These songs are widely sung in bhajanas. His songs are printed in the famous anthology of T. P. Kōṇḍarāma Ayyar entitled "*Bhagavad Bhajana Paddhati*". The song, *Pore mī yinṭṭaḷu* in Āhiri rāga, sung at the last quarter of a bhajana and just before sunrise is the composition of Tūmu Narasimha Dāsa. He was a svanāma mudrakāra. Tūmu Narasimha Dāsa was born in 1790 and lived in Guṇṭūr. He visited many sacred places in North India and South India.

During the course of his pilgrimage to Rāmēś'varam, he came to Tiruvaīyār to pay his homage to the great composer, who was the beacon light of attraction in those days. This was in the year 1821. He heard the Mahā gāyaka sing his Kritis in a captivating manner. Tears of ecstatic joy rolled down the cheeks of Narasimha Dāsa as he heard Tyāgarāja and exclaimed that he was a veritable Nārada on Earth. He wrote a śīsa padya and two other verses immortalizing his experiences. The verses translated will read thus :—

“ I heard the Ānanda Saṅkīrtanāvali

I was thrilled by the Bhāva siddhi and the

s'uddha bhakti

I saw the congregation of Devotees and Disciples and felt  
transported at their sterling Vocal music.

I saw the Vinaya satsampat and Vivēka  
and the glory of Rāma bhakti

I felt an experience which is not  
within the reach of even Brahma”

“ I realized that in this world, Tyāgarāja

was the embodiment of all that is good (sadguṇa

puñjam)

I felt as if swimming in the ocean of celestial bliss”.

In another verse, he says

“ It is impossible to name another person in this world who can be said to be the Equal of Tyāgarāja in Rāma bhakti”. “If only Tyāgarāja once with Prēma called Rāmā! forthwith came the response from S'rī Rāmā, Oh Tyāgarāja! Here I am! What is it that you desire?”

These verses in Telugu give us an inspiring picture of the great composer of Tiruvaiyār. After some days, Tūmu Narasimha Dāsa, took leave of Tyāgarāja. After visiting Navapaṣāṇam, Rāmēs'varam, S'riraṅgam, Jambukēs'varam, Kañchīpuram, Tirupati and Kālahasti he returned back to Guṇṭūr.

### GOPINATHA BHATTACHARYA

Gopinātha Bhaṭṭāchārya was an adept in Hindusthāni music. He lived in Benares. He heard a number of Kritis of Tyāgarāja being sung by pilgrims who came to Benares from the South. He thirsted to see the composer of these songs, Tradition has it, that when he planned a pilgrimage to Rāmēs'varam he was advised by a Divine Voice in dream to pay a visit to Tyāgarāja. In the course of his pilgrimage, Bhaṭṭāchārya came to Tanjore and hastened to Tiruvaiyār. There he met the great composer, who accorded him a warm welcome. Bhaṭṭāchārya told him that he had heard his pieces sung by numerous pilgrims who came to Benares and that he was for a long time thirsting to see the author of those Kritis. "That great ambition of his was fulfilled that day" he concluded. Tyāgarāja was visibly moved and burst forth into the famous Kṛiti in Tōḍi rāga, Ādi tāḷa "*Dāsarathē nī ruṇamu*". The meaning of the anupallavi of this song is "Oh Rasika's'irōmaṇi (Rāmā)! you have made my name shine in far off lands to my heart's content ...". Tyāgarāja was alive to the fact that his compositions were widely sung and his reputation had spread far and wide. Later in his life also, he gives expression to the same idea in the Kṛiti *Ī vasudha nī vanṭi* (Sahāna rāga). He says in the charaṇa, of this song "*Bhuvanamandu kīrtigalka jēsē*". Gōpinātha

Bhaṭṭāchārya was thrilled at this spontaneous outburst of melody. He stayed as the honoured guest of the composer at Tiruvaīyār for some time and then resumed his journey to Rāmēs'varam.

### GOPALAKRISHNA BHARATI

Long before he sketched his *Nandanār Charitram*. Gōpālakṛṣṇa Bhārati had attained name and fame as a fine composer of songs (viḍuti kīrtanas) in Tamil. Clothed in simple language and fine music, these songs were in the mouth of every one in Tamil Nad at that time. *Nandanār Charitram* was first published in 1861 and the opera must have been completed a year or two before that date. Gōpālakṛṣṇa Bhārati, the rising composer in the thirties of the last century desired to see Tyāgarāja and receive his blessings. One day he went to Tiruvaīyār and met the great composer in his house. The latter welcomed him and enquired of the place from which he came. Bhāratiyār replied that he hailed from Māyavaram. Forthwith enquired Tyāgarāja : "Do you know of one Gōpālakṛṣṇa Bhārati there who has composed some good songs in Tamil?" Bhāratiyār was rarely prepared for this kind of tribute from the sage of Tiruvaīyār. With the humility characteristic of Bhāratiyār, he meekly replied "That Bhārati is my humble self, Sir". Tyāgarāja went into raptures when he heard this reply.

Tyāgarāja, unlike the generality of composers who always look upon other's compositions with jealousy and contempt, welcomed creative activity in others. It is wellknown how he congratulated his disciple Subbarāya Sāstri when he gave a recital of his newly

composed Kriti, *Ninu vinā gatigāna jagāna* in Kalyāṇi rāga before him in the Dharma samvardhani temple at Tiruvaivār.

It is also known how he was enamoured of the varṇas of Viṇa Kuppaiyyar and how he encouraged him to compose more and more varṇas. Viṇa Kuppaiyyar has the proud record of having composed the largest number of tāna varṇas.

Gōpālakṛṣṇa Bhārati did not possess a good personality. His human frame had some angularities and Tyāgarāja could not guess that this person could be a composer.

Just at the time, the disciples of Tyāgarāja were singing a Kriti in Ābhōgi rāga. When the song was finished, Tyāgarāja asked Bhāratiyār if he had composed any piece in Ābhōgi rāga. Gōpālakṛṣṇa Bhārati did not make a reply. Subsequently the disciples started singing other Kritis of Tyāgarāja. That very night Bhāratiyār composed the now frequently sung piece "*Sabhāpatikku vēru deivam*" in Ābhōgi rāga and sang it before Tyāgarāja the next day. The great composer was impressed with the excellence of this Tamil piece and congratulated and blessed Gōpālakṛṣṇa Bhārati. When he learnt that this piece was sketched and completed the previous night his admiration for Bhārati's creative talents increased. The blessings of Tyāgarāja proved a turning point in his life and Gōpālakṛṣṇa Bhārati subsequently began to compose numerous songs in Tamil.

Bhāratiyār was impressed with the spiritual atmosphere of Tyāgarāja's house and the way in which the aged composer without standing on formalities mixed with the disciples and sang along with them.

## SVATI TIRUNAL'S EMISSARY - VADIVELU

Svāti Tirunāl, the Ruler of Travancore, had heard a number of compositions of Tyāgarāja from the latter's disciple, Kanniah Bhāgavatar. The monarch naturally desired to see the famous composer. Vaḍivēlu of Tanjore, one of the Samasthāna Vidvāns in Svāti Tirunāl's Court at the time and only three years senior to the Mahārājah in age, was commissioned for the purpose. Vaḍivēlu was squint-eyed. He was a brilliant Singer and Violinist. In recognition of his proficiency in Violin playing, the Mahārājah presented him an Ivory Violin in the year 1834. Vaḍivēlu enjoyed the Mahārājah's confidence, and he undertook to go to Tiruvaiyār. Vaḍivēlu had seen Tyāgarāja and was a good friend of the great composer's disciple, Viṇa Kuppaiyyar. But he had not been formally introduced to Tyāgarāja.

Vaḍivēlu came to Tiruvaiyār and took up his residence in a house in Tirumañjana Vidhi, the street wherein Tyāgarāja lived. Vaḍivēlu's house was in the opposite row and nearer the Kāvēri River. Tyāgarāja who went to the river invariably for his bath and Sandhyāvandana had to pass that house. After settling down in the near house, Vaḍivēlu made it a point to sing every evening in his house, just to catch the attention of Tyāgarāja. When the great composer went to the Kāvēri to perform his Sandhyāvandana he listened to Vaḍivēlu's music on the way. On the very first day, touched by the music he halted for a while in front of Vaḍivēlu's house and then returned home. On the second day, Tyāgarāja halted for a longer time in front of Vaḍivēlu's house, and was convinced that the singer was a gifted person. On the third

day, his curiosity was so much roused that he decided to enter the house to find out the person that was giving such a splendid music. When Vaḍivēlu saw Tyāgarāja entering his temporary residence, he at once got up, prostrated before Tyāgarāja, welcomed him and said "Oh Sir! It is a happy day for me. If you had so desired, I myself would have come to your house to sing. You have conferred upon me a great honour and privilege by coming here. The Great Man that Tyāgarāja was, he congratulated him heartily on his splendid musical gifts and invited him to sing in his house the next day. Vaḍivēlu responded to the invitation and earned the goodwill of Tyāgarāja.

Vaḍivēlu was anxiously waiting for an opportunity to broach the object of his mission to Tiruvaiyār. He sang a number of compositions of Svāti Tirunāl before the great composer and easily impressed him. On the next occasion, Vaḍivēlu sang so well that Tyāgarāja in great ecstasy said that Vaḍivēlu can ask of him anything he desired. The long longed-for opportunity at last came and Vaḍivēlu pleaded in a gentle tune: "The Mahārājah of Travancore desires to *meet you*, Sir. Please come to....." and before he could complete all that he wanted to say on the subject, he found that the Great Composer was taken aback by the request. After meditating for a while, Tyāgarāja replied "I shall certainly *meet him*, and my promise will be fulfilled. But the meeting will take place in the *other world* and *not here*. His *Upāsana Mūrti* is the same as that of mine (Padmanābha and Rāma)". Vaḍivēlu felt sad at the failure of his mission and left Tiruvaiyār shortly afterwards to report to Svāti Tirunāl the result of his errand.

It might be mentioned in this connection that there were no railways in those days and facilities for travel were very meagre. Though the incident referred to above took place about twelve years before the demise of the Royal Composer, yet he and Tyāgarāja did not meet. Svāti Tirūnāl, having known of the great ideals preached and practised by Tyāgarāja—would have himself come to Tiruvaiyār to see the Great Composer, but the political problems of his time prevented him from leaving the State. But the interesting fact remains that Svāti Tirunāl passed away on the 25th December 1846 (Puṣya S'ukla Aṣṭami) and Tyāgarāja on the 6th January 1847 (Puṣya Bahula Pañchami).

#### GOVINDA MARAR (1798 - 1843)

*Gōvinda Mārār* was a brilliant singer of the first half of the 19th century. He hailed from Rāmamaṅgalam village in the Muvvāṭṭuppuzhā Taluq of Travancore. Besides possessing an accurate layajñānam, he had a highly responsive ravai jāti s'ārīram. This enabled him to sing Pallavis in six degrees of speed. For this reason he was called Ṣaṭkāla Gōvinda Mārār. He is also known as Ṣaṭkāla Gōvinda Dās. In the history of South Indian Music, two other musicians associated with the Title "Ṣaṭkāla" are Ṣaṭkāla Narasayya of Salem and Viṇa Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Dās of Vizianagaram. The latter was called "Ṣaṭkāla Chakravarti".

Gōvinda Mārār was a religious-minded man. Later in his life, he started on a pilgrimage to Benares. He visited Trivandrum and stayed as the honoured guest in Svāti Tirunāl's Court. He later resumed his pilgrimage and came to Tiruvaiyār in the year 1842 to visit the holy shrine there and to pay homage to the Great Composer, Tyāgarāja. The



first disciple of Tyāgarāja, to popularize the compositions of the Great Composer in Travancore was Kanniah Bhāgavatar. On hearing those compositions, many, including Svāti Tirunāl and Paramēs'vara Bhāgavatar (1815—1892) desired to go and see the sage of Tiruvaiyār.

Gōvinda Mārār used a seven-stringed tambura. With the exception of the mandaram, the other three strings were doubled. The instrument had two pañchamas, two sārāṇis, two anusārāṇis and one mandaram. The instrument was bedecked with a flag on the top, a symbol of Mārār's challenging eminence in music. He sang, providing the drone accompaniment and the rhythmic accompaniment himself. In this respect he was a veritable *Ekallan* mentioned in early literature. While he twanged the strings of the tambura with the fingers of his right hand, he played on the Kañjira with his left hand. The Kañjira was held in position between the first two toes of the right leg and played.

It was an Ēkādaśī day, when Gōvinda Mārār came to Tyāgarāja's house. During the night, Bhajana was going on. He went and sat amongst the devotees, assembled there. After the pūrva bhāga was over, as was customary, the distinguished guests were invited to sing some songs; (it is only after the visitors have had their chance to sing that the uttara bhāga commencing with the Divyanāma saṅkīrtanam is begun). When Mārār was requested to sing, he tuned his tambura which already attracted the attention of the audience by its flag and seven strings and began singing the 4th Aṣṭapadi *Chandana charchita* of Jayadēva in Pantuvarāḷi rāga, Ādi tāḷ; (being the Ēkādaśī—Haridina—the choice of the piece was appropriate).

He started singing in the *ati ati viḷambita Kāla* (first degree of speed). People were wondering why he started at such a dead slow tempo but they were struck by the absolute precision in duration between count and count. Then he sang the chosen theme successively in *ati viḷambita* (second degree of speed), *viḷambita* (third degree of speed), *madhyama kāla* (fourth degree of speed), *druta kāla* (fifth degree of speed) and *Atidruta kāla* (sixth degree of speed). As he approached the fifth degree of speed, the entire audience became spell-bound and when he sang in the sixth degree of speed, Tyāgarāja himself was taken aback at his *laya samṣat*. By way of paying tribute to his genius, he asked his disciples to sing the *Pañcharatna* in *S'rīrāga* "Endarō Mahānubhāvulu" a composition already composed. All the disciples of Tyāgarāja knew the *Pañcharatna Kritis* well because they were regularly sung in the *Uñchavritti bhajanas*. "Prastutimpa" is the actual word used in this connection in the biography of Tyāgarāja by the *Wālājāpeṭ* disciples. This word means 'in order to specially praise him'. This also leads to the inference that *Gōvinda Mārār* was one of the *Mahānubhāvas* (great men) contemplated by Tyāgarāja. *Gōvinda Mārār* subsequently stayed as the honoured guest of the Great Composer for some days and then resumed his pilgrimage. He passed away in *Paṇḍarpūr* in year 1843.

*Wālājāpeṭ Kṛṣṇasvāmi Bhāgavatar* was playing on the stringed instrument (*Kinnari*) in the *Bhajana*, when *Ṣaṭkāla Gōvinda Mārār* sang.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SOME INTERESTING INCIDENTS IN HIS LIFE

*“Vinarādā nā manavi”.*

God has his own ways of proclaiming the greatness of his devotees. The circumstance that led to the composition of the Kṛiti *“Vinarādā nā manavi”* (Dēvagāndhārī rāga) is as inspiring as it is revealing.

Tyāgarāja happened to visit Śrīraṅgam during the Chaitrōtsavam. He was staying in a house in South Chitra Street. This house was near the corner of the South Chitra Street and West Chitra Street and was in the தேர்வடம் போக்கு சந்து. This house now bears the door number 86. When the Deity on golden horseback was coming at a distance, Tyāgarāja, who from the front of his house looked at the Procession was so moved that he forthwith burst forth into the song *“Rāju vedalē jūtannu rārē”*. The Deity came majestically borne by the 16 trained bearers and passed the corner. Tyāgarāja wanted to go near the Deity and have darṣan of *Vaibhōga Raṅga*, but the surging crowds, particularly at the corner made it difficult for him to go near the Deity and have darṣan. Disappointed, he stood.

In the meantime, the procession which had passed the corner suddenly came to a standstill. The bearers became benumbed as it were and felt that they were unable to

move. (On such occasions, it is usual to presume that some evil eye had cast its wicked influence and steps will be taken to neutralize the effect). Feeling that some *dhriṣṭi* had overtaken the procession, acts to neutralize it were performed. Later the Dēvadāsis and Rāja dāsis who were going in front of the Deity were asked to dance by way of propitiating the Deity. Even then there was no sign of the bearers regaining strength to move. Sometime later, one of the Temple Priests became inspired and said "The great bhakta is standing there (pointing to the corner). If he is brought and made to have darṣan of the Deity, the procession will move". Immediately the Temple officials and Priests went in a body and spotted out Tyāgarāja and apprised him of all that had taken place. Tyāgarāja visibly moved, came near the Deity and sang the famous song "*Vinarādā nā manavi*" "Will you not listen to my request" (the request being that the Deity should move). In the anupallavi, the words "*Kānta kāntalella kāmīñchi pilachitē*" refer to the fact that the Dēvadāsis danced and beckoned Raṅganātha to move and that their efforts proved fruitless. The words "*Rājasatulu jūchi rammani pilachitē*" refer to the fact that the Rājādāsis subsequently danced and requested Raṅganātha to move and that their efforts also proved fruitless. When the song "*Vinarādā*" was completed and Dipārādhana performed, the Deity began to move to the great joy of all.

Subsequently Tyāgarāja was invited to the Temple, and on that day, the Mūla Vighraha was decorated with Muttangi (coat of Pearls). Tyāgarāja was so inspired at the sight of the Lord that he burst forth into the famous Kriti "*Ō Raṅgasāyi*" (Kāmbhōji rāga - Ādi tāḷa). This song furnishes a valuable internal evidence as well.

*The Ānandabhairavi episode.*

The question often asked by the student of Karnāṭic music is why it is that Tyāgarāja, who has to his credit a number of scholarly kritis in rare rāgas, has composed only three simple songs in the popular rāga, Ānandabhairavi. The answer to this puzzling question is to be found in a remarkable incident that took place during his lifetime

One of his brilliant contemporaries was the gifted singer and actor, §Tiribhuvanam Svāminātha Ayyar. Like Aṭhāṇa Appayya, Tōḍi Sitārāmayya and others, this singer also chose to specialize in a particular rāga. He chose Ānandabhairavi. Very soon he attracted the attention of the Vidvāns of his time by his scholarly exposition of this rāgā.

The Bommaḷāṭṭam troupe to which he belonged happened to come to Tiruvaiyār once. The party staged their play night after night and drew large audiences. Tyāgarāja's disciples also attended the play. They were so impressed with Svāminātha Ayyar's exposition of Ānandabhairavi that they resolved to inform their Guru, Tyāgarāja, about the genius of the performer. The great composer heard of the extraordinary talents of the person but he did not give out his mind immediately. He argued within himself that there should be some truth in the report of his Siṣyas and finally resolved to go and attend the play *incognito*. He went one night and waited for the moment when the person would begin the exposition of his favourite rāga. The moment came and the actor began his ālāpana and did it remarkably well. Tyāgarāja the great man that he was,

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§Tiribhuvanam is a place near Kumbakonam. Swaminatha Ayyar was an Archaka in the temple of the place and was also called Swaminatha Gurukkal.

could not contain himself and rose from his place and at the conclusion of the performance waded through the crowd to go near the actor and express his appreciation. When the audience found that the great composer was present there, there was a flutter and all made way for him to go near the stage. Immediately there was dismal silence and the huge audience anxiously awaited to hear the Great Composer speak. On seeing Tyāgarāja come near the stage, the actor jumped down from the stage and fell at his feet and spoke in great humility, "Oh, Sir, it is sheer impertinence on my part to have attempted an ālāpana when you were here. Please pardon me". To this Tyāgarāja replied thus: "My disciples told me of your extraordinary gifts in making an ālāpana of Ānandabhairavi. I just came to hear the ālāpana myself. I am extremely pleased and delighted at your performance. I am so glad that my disciples brought this to my notice". A thunderous applause then followed. The actor, proud of the encomiums bestowed on him by Tyāgarāja, hesitated for a while and then in a faltering tone addressed him thus: "Revered Composer! I have a boon to ask of thee". "It is granted even before your asking" replied Tyāgarāja.

"Sir, the boon is that from this day onwards you should desist from composing in Ānandabhairavi rāga. Future generations will then begin to enquire why it is that Tyāgarāja has not composed many pieces in Ānandabhairavi. Then this incident will be remembered by them, and incidentally my name also will go down to posterity."

All the people held their breath on hearing this strange and insolent request of the Actor. But Tyāgarāja only smiled and, admiring the shrewdness of the actor, nodded his head by way of granting his request and withdrew.

True to the spirit of the promise given, he not only did not compose in Ānandabhairavi afterwards, but even did not teach the three pieces already composed by him in this rāga to his later disciples. The Divyanāma kīrtana, *Rāma Rāma nī vāramu*, the Utsava sampradāya kīrtana, “*Kṣīra sāgara vihāra*” and the Kriti, *Nikēteliyaka*” have come down to us through the disciples who had learnt them from the composer prior to this incident.

*Blessing Mahā Vaidyanātha Ayyar's father.*

At the junction of the Tirumañjana Vīdhi and South Māḍa Street in Tiruvaīyār, Tanjore District, it was the custom for all bhajana parties, and nāgasvaram parties to halt for a few minutes, sing or perform, and then proceed. This was done out of reverence to Tyāgarāja who lived in a house in Tirumañjana Vīdhi near this spot. The custom which originated during the lifetime of the composer has continued even now out of reverence to his memory.

Once, Pañchanada Ayyar (also called Duraisāmi Ayyar), the father of Mahā Vaidyanātha Ayyar happened to sing a kriti of Tyāgarāja at that spot. The young Pañchanada Ayyar sang splendidly that day. Tyāgarāja who was listening to the music went into raptures over it and exclaimed “Who is it that is singing there! I am hearing a new and a fascinating voice!”. So saying, he left the house and walked to the bhajana party and embraced the young singer in ecstasy. The singer's joy on the occasion knew no bounds and he could hardly find words to express his feelings of profound thanks to the Great Composer. Tyāgarāja blessed him saying, that sons who would bring glory and renown would be born to him.

True to the prediction, Rāmasvāmi S'ivan and shortly afterwards Mahā Vaidyanātha Ayyar were born to Pañchana Ayyar. It is common knowledge that the two brothers have shed lustre on South Indian music both by their concerts and by their magnificent compositions. The 72 mēlarāgamālīka of Mahā Vaidyanātha Ayyar stands as one of the world's longest musical compositions today. It takes more than two hours to perform.

### *Daṇḍamu peṭṭenurā.*

Once when he finished composing the Kṛitī in Balahamsa rāga beginning with the words "*Daṇḍamu peṭṭenurā*", one of his disciples slowly hinted that the pallavi commenced with an unusual phrase. Tyāgarāja was taken aback, brooded for a while, and immediately asked one of his disciples to sing the elaborate exposition of the Balahamsa rāga given in the 'Kāṭakam' (Rāga lexicon). To the surprise of all it was found that the phrase *Pa ma ri sa* with which the song commenced actually occurred in the course of the sañchāra of this rāga as a Viśēṣa prayōga. Tyāgarāja smilingly remarked on that occasion that if that Rāga did not admit of that phrase, it would not have come from his mouth.

### *Ni dayachē.*

Once a darwan who was a regular visitor to Tyāgarāja's bhajanas, requested the latter to teach him a song. The composer asked him to sing any piece he liked, just to gauge his vocal powers. Finding the limited nature, character and compass of his voice, he composed the simple Kṛitī in Yadukulakāmbhōji, *Ni dayachē*, and taught it to him.



*Prayer heard.*

Wālājāpeṭ Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar (1781—1874) was one of the prominent disciples of Tyāgarāja. He may be described as *Tyāgarāja's Boswell*. At the beginning, he did not make the expected progress in music. Tyāgarāja felt sad and prayed to God that he may be pleased to confer musical wisdom on the siṣya. From the next day onwards it is said that Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar began to make amazing progress in music, and in the fullness of time became one of Tyāgarāja's reputed and respected disciples. He carried with him the largest repertoire of the saint's compositions, having been associated with him for over a period of 26 years. A strong and well-built man that he was, he was named Gaṇapati by his co-disciples. Whenever work involving muscular energy had to be done for their master's household, Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar was commissioned for the purpose.

*Viṇa Kuppayyar.*

When Viṇa Kuppayyar came to Tyāgarāja, to learn his compositions, the former never disclosed to him, that he was an adept in viṇa play. He was however longing for an opportunity to play on Tyāgarāja's viṇa.

One day the Great Composer was out on some business. The other siṣyas too had gone elsewhere. The long awaited opportunity came and Kuppayyar took his guru's viṇa and was playing splendidly on it. Tyāgarāja's wife, who was startled at the delightful music of the viṇa, came from the kitchen, peeped into the pūja room and found that it was only the siṣya Kuppayyar playing upon it. Unobserved she stood and was listening with interest to the exquisite music.

After sometime, Tyāgarāja came. Greeted with the delightful music of the vīṇa, he paused in front of his house and was wondering who could be playing upon it. The music was so captivating that he sat on the pial of his house to listen to it further. After sometime his curiosity was so much roused that he went in to see the performer on the vīṇa. When the śiṣya saw his Guru, he kept the vīṇa back in its place with trembling hands and prostrating at his feet requested him to forgive him for playing upon the instrument without his knowledge and permission. But Tyāgarāja smilingly said “Get up, my dear boy! Don’t worry. Why did you not tell me beforehand that you were such a gifted player on this instrument?”

This incident reveals the musical nobility of the great bard of Tiruvaiyār.

“*Dārini telusukoṇṭi*”.

Dāsari, a reputed nāgasvaram player of the time, was once engaged to perform during the temple festival at Tiruvaiyār. One night, as the procession turned to the South Māḍa Street, the nāgasvaram player stopped at the junction of the Tirumañjana Vidhi (where Tyāgarāja lived) and played the piece *Dārini telusukoṇṭi* prefacing it with a brief ālāpana. The stillness of the night, the beautiful music, the sparkling saṅgatis of this masterpiece of Tyāgarāja in the Suddha Sāvēri rāga, all made a tremendous impression on the listeners. The sage of Tiruvaiyār who was listening to the piece from his house was so touched by the brilliant performance that, leaving his house, he walked up the distance, came near the performer and congratulated him on his brilliant performance. This is one of the five Kritis which was composed by Tyāgarāja when he visited Tiruvottiyūr, a shrine six miles to the north of Madras.

## CHAPTER IX

### CIRCUMSTANCES THAT OCCASIONED SOME OF HIS FAMOUS COMPOSITIONS

#### *“Nanupālimpa”*

On the occasion of his daughter's marriage, many disciples brought presents. The disciple, Wālājāpeṭ Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar brought an inspiring picture of Kōdaṇḍarāma as a present (This picture was painted by Pallavi Ellayyar). In those days there were no railways and the disciple carried the picture on his shoulder walking all the distance from Wālājāpeṭ to Tiruvaīyār in Tanjore District. As soon as Tyāgarāja saw this charming picture he burst forth into the famous song *“Nanupālimpa”* in Mōhana rāga. The charaṇe of this song is simply a picturesque description of this beautiful painting. The Pallavi means “Did you come walking all the way to protect me, Oh Lord !”

The Sāhitya of this song has a special significance. Even though he got back the Idol thrown into the Kāvēri river by his cruel brother, he was not very happy over the incident. Years after the Idol incident, when the picture came, he thought it was a Divine Gift. He became rapturous and subsequently performed Pūja to both the Rāma vigraha and the Picture. This Picture can even now be seen in Tiruvaīyār.

#### *“Chintistunnāḍe”.*

Once, on the occasion of the Saptasthānam festival, a large concourse of pilgrims had gathered in the Praṇatārthihara-

svāmi temple in Tiruvaiyār. This annual festival is the pride of Tiruvaiyār and Tyāgarāja himself accompanied the procession every year leading his Bhajana party. His bhajana was attended by yatis, vidvāns, musicians and composers. Tyāgarāja came to be called *Bhūlōka Nārada*. It took more than twenty-four hours for the procession to reach back the temple after touching the famous shrines *en route*.

The temple was filled to overflowing that day and it was a sea of humanity engaged devoutly in singing sacred songs. Tyāgarāja was visibly moved at the glorious sight and sang in a poetic vein the famous Kriti, *Chintistunnāḍē* (Mukhāri rāga - Ādi tāḷa). The substance of the song is, "Finding that all people were engaging themselves in Bhajanas, Yama was seriously brooding over the fact that he might ultimately have no work to do, all the people automatically going to heaven". No work means, abolition of his whole establishment with the consequent loss of employment to himself and his colleagues. Who will provide these people with appointments? Yama further

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§The Deities of the Seven Holy Shrines, Tiruvaiyar, Tiruppayanam, Tiruvedikudi, Tiruchotrutturai, Tirukkandiyur, Tiruppunturutti and Tiruneyttanam (Tillasthanam) are carried in gaily decorated glass palanquins, *i.e.* palanquins studded with small pieces of looking glass.

The main palanquin starts from Tiruvaiyar in the morning and is joined on the way by the palanquins of the respective temples *en route*. The entire route will be decorated with flags, festoons and greens. Numerous bhajana parties will accompany the procession. Owners of shops and residents of the houses on the way will vie with each other in giving shelter, food and tiffin to the pilgrims, accompanying the procession. When the Grand Procession of Seven Palanquins with an accompanying crowd of devotees numbering more than a lakh, enters Tiruvaiyar the following morning, it will be an inspiring sight. It will indeed be a sight for the Gods. Tyagaraja who led his [ *vide p. 82*

argued within himself that even the man in the street had no chance of coming under his sway, since he was spending his time, singing the sterling Saṅkīrtanas (devotional songs) of Tyāgarāja.

*Nidhi chāla sukhamā.*

Soṇṭi Veṅkaṭaramaṇayya felt proud of the fact that his disciple, Tyāgarāja had composed some brilliant compositions. One day he convened a meeting of the vidvāns in Tiruvaīyār and asked Tyāgarāja to sing some of his compositions before them. That day Tyāgarāja sang his Kṛiti, *Dorugunā iṭu vaṇṭi sēva* in Bilahari rāga - Ādi tāla in a splendid manner. With the theme, *Kāmitaphaladāyakiyai Sita* in the third charaṇa, he developed a brilliant and thought-provoking niraval and followed it up with kalpana svaras of variegated patterns and endless beauty. The Guru as well as the vidvāns present were thrilled at his performance. Towards the close of the performance, Soṇṭi Veṅkaṭaramaṇayya by way of eulogizing his disciples's performance said "*Dorugunā iṭu vaṇṭi Siṣyudu?*" (can one get a disciple like him?) So saying, he decorated Tyāgarāja, with some of the costly presents which he himself had received from the Mahārājah of Tanjore.

*Continued from p. 81* ] bhajana used to sing kritis appropriate to the time of the day and night *en route*. Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar and Patnam Subrahmanya Ayyar have during their life-time participated in the bhajana of the Saptasthanam festival.

Rivers have to be crossed during the course of the journey touching the seven Shrines. If the Rivers happen to be in floods, the bearers of the Palanquins will skilfully swim across the rivers, bearing the palanquins on their shoulders and reach the other side.

Subsequently, it was decided that Tyāgarāja should perform before Soṇṭi Veṅkaṭasubbayya, the chief Āsthāna vidvān of Tanjore court and the father Soṇṭi Veṅkaṭaramaṇayya. A day on which all the samasthāna vidvāns were expected to be present in Tanjore was chosen for the purpose. The arrangement was that the vidvāns, after hearing Tyāgarāja for an hour or two, may go to the Palace to attend that night's function.

Tyāgarāja was not aware of the Palace engagement for the vidvāns that night. He felt honoured at being invited to perform before the father of his Guru and before an audience which consisted of the cream of the musical genius of Tanjore. He took Kāmbhōji rāga and sang a detailed ālāpana. He followed it up with the rendering of his scholarly Kriti, *Mari mari ninne moraliḍani* (Ādi tāḷa). The entire performance including the ālāpana, tāna, rendering of the piece, niraval and kalpana svara occupied eight hours. The vidvāns present wondered how with such a short training, Tyāgarāja became an eminent performer and composer. The samasthāna vidvāns who were expected to be present that night at a function in the Tanjore Palace forgot all about it. The next day they went to the Palace and told the Mahārājah the reason for their absence at the Palace function and concluded by saying that they were literally immersed in the *Gāna rasābdi* (ocean of musical juice) the previous night. Soṇṭi Veṅkaṭasubbiah also joined in the tributes and said to the King that he himself honoured the young composer by giving him a seat next to himself and decorated him with some of the valuable presents received by him from the samasthānam. It was after hearing this chorus of tributes to Tyāgarāja, that the desire arose in the mind of Sarabhōji that he should also listen to the music of Tyāgarāja.

Some of the Palace officials went to Tyāgarāja's house and appraised him of the desire of Sarabhōji to listen to his music. Normally Tyāgarāja would have responded to the invitation. He was not a stranger to the Palace. As a young boy, he had accompanied his father to the Palace wherein the latter used to give expositions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Tulajāji's court. Rāma-brahmam used to read all the six adhyāyas during Rāma navami festival. But what upset Tyāgarāja was the suggestion that when he came to the palace, he may come with a song or two composed in praise of the Mahārājah of Tanjore. The situation was aggravated by their statement that he would be honoured with a gift of ten vēlis of land and a big bullion of gold in return.

Tyāgarāja got enraged and gave a fitting reply in the song ni Kalyāṇi rāga "*Nidhi chāla sukhamā*". The whole song is a series of interrogations addressed to his manas. He says "Oh, manas! Do not be treacherous! Speak out the truth. Which conduces to greater bliss? Is it praise of Rāma or the praise of mortal man who is just a bundle of pride and conceit?" The Palace officials were rarely prepared for this musical reply. They withdrew unwillingly and reported to Sarabhōji all that had taken place.

This incident happened about the year 1802, three years after Sarabhōji came to the throne. When he ascended the throne, the British East India Company had taken away the Ruling powers from him and Sarabhōji was just a King in name. The Ruler was suffering from an Inferiority complex and he took to heart Tyāgarāja's blunt refusal. He sent two of his trusted lieutenants on horseback to fetch Tyāgarāja. The moment these men left the Palace, the King was seized of a severe stomach-ache and none of the Darbār Physicians

were able to offer him any relief. Astrologers were sent for and one of them opined that this ailment was perhaps the consequence of some great soul being insulted. Immediately Sarabhōji sent another pair of his trusted lieutenants and ordered the previous pair not to approach Tyāgarāja. These people rushed on horseback at terrific speed and contacted the previous pair, before they actually went to Tyāgarāja's house. The moment these four people started back to Tanjore, Sarabhōji felt an instant relief. He thanked God. He realized the greatness of Tyāgarāja. Subsequently he went to Tyāgarāja's house in Tiruvaiyār, expressed regret for what had taken place and the two became good friends since that time. Tyāgarāja's Ēkādasi bhajanas were attended by Sarabhōji, his son-in-law Mōti Rao and members of the Royal household including ladies. They stayed in the Kalyāṇa Mahāl during the whole night. This Palace is situated at the backyard of the house of Tyāgarāja and one could hear the sacred songs sung by Tyāgarāja and disciples clearly from this Palace. When the Ēkādasi bhajana was over, all the members of the Royal household returned back to Tanjore early in the morning, some on horseback and the rest in carriages.

In those days, it was a common thing for composers to compose songs in praise of Rulers. The famous varṇa in Tōḍi rāga - Aṭa tāḷa beginning with the words "*Kanakāṅgi*" is in honour of Sarabhōji. The *Sarabhēndra Bhūpāla Kuravañji* is a dance drama written in honour of Sarabhōji. But, Tyāgarāja felt that he was a trustee for the talents bestowed upon him by God and that he should utilize the talents only to praise God or in singing of other great themes and not for singing the praise of mortal man. When Tyāgarāja gave the fitting reply in the song "*Nidhi chāla sukhamā*" his mother congratulated him on his heroic stand. His



father was not alive at that time. If he had been alive, he too would have felt overjoyed at his son's stand. The *Nidhi chāla sukhamā* incident raised Tyāgarāja in the estimation of his contemporaries. Many came to revere him as a *Mahā puruṣa*. But his elder brother, who was more a man of the world felt sorry that Tyāgarāja curtly refused the royal offer.

The desire however persisted in the mind of Sarabhōji that he must give some aid to Tyāgarāja, if possible even without the latters' knowledge.

#### *Coins Incident.*

One day, Sarabhōji commissioned two of his lieutenants to mingle with the bhaktas accompanying Tyāgarāja's Uñchavritti bhajana and slowly drop into his Uñchavritti s'ombu (*i.e.* the vessel in which rice was dropped) some gold coins. The lieutenants, accompanied Tyāgarāja from behind and unnoticed by him slowly dropped at intermittent intervals the gold coins one by one. Some disciples noticed this, but they had not the courage to interfere, since they knew that the men were from the Palace. As misfortune would have it, when at a subsequent stage, they dropped a coin, it dashed against the edge of the vessel and making a ringing sound, went in. The previous coins were dropped right into the centre of the rice contents and no sound was heard. When Tyāgarāja heard the sound of a coin, he asked his disciples what the matter was. They revealed to him all that had taken place. The Great Composer got infuriated and immediately emptied the contents of the vessel on the road and proceeded with his Uñchavritti bhajana. He felt that even the rice in the vessel got contaminated by the coins.

Even after this incident, Sarabhōji insisted that he must be allowed to offer some kind of *Kaiikaryam* to the Great Composer. Reluctantly the Great Composer allowed some of the siṣyas who came to study under him to be fed in the Kalyāṇa Mahāl at the Raja's expense.

### *Bhavanuta.*

One day, by a curious irony of circumstances Tyāgarāja had no food to eat. The whole day he starved. (This incident took place during the early period of his life). In the night at about 11 p.m. one old man with a heavy bundle on his head, and accompanied by a lady and a servant came in search of Tyāgarāja. The latter welcomed him and felt very sad that he had nothing to give the guests. The old man said "Don't worry Tyāgu ! I have brought enough provisions. So saying, he gave orders to his servant to cook food. As the preparations were going on, the old gentleman as well as his wife went on conversing with Tyāgarāja. When the food was prepared, it was offered for naivēdhyam to the Lord. Then all of them had a hearty meal. The lady served the food to all. Even after the meal they were talking with Tyāgarāja. When it was nearing day break, the visitors blessed Tyāgarāja and said that he would become great. They formally took leave and came out and disappeared. Tyāgarāja came out and looked for them, ran hither and thither but all in vain. Later on, by a Divine flash, he came to know that the old gentleman and lady were S'rī Rāmā and Sītā and the servant who cooked that night was none other than the great Āñjanēya. They came to bless Tyāgarāja and from that time onwards Tyāgarāja's position as a top-ranking composer became fully established. That day he composed the Kṛiti in Mōhana rāga, *Bhavanuta*. The burden of the song is "Oh Lord ! who came to my house and spoke to me in such

abundance, please rest in my heart and free yourself of your wearisomeness”:

- (1) “Nāto bahu balkina”,
- (2) “Bhavanamu jēri nanu verapiñchina” and
- (3) “Prabala jēsi nanu brochēnanu konna”

are the key statements in this song and they afford valuable internal evidences.

Another song composed on the occasion paying a tribute to Āñjanēya was *Kalugunā pada nīraja* (Pūrṇalalita rāga - Ādi tāla). During the Ārādhana festival of Tyāgarāja, this song is invariably sung by members of Tyāgarāja’s Siṣya Parampara in the morning at the samādhi.

*Endu dāgi nāḍo* (Idol incident).

Just before the Bhōgi Paṇḍigai of a year, a dispute arose between Tyāgarāja and his elder brother. The latter’s wrath was aroused for no legitimate fault on the part of his Saintly brother. Some days after the Bhōgi Paṇḍigai as Tyāgarāja was away for Uñchavritti, the cruel brother in great anger took the Rāma vigraha and threw it in the river Kāvēri at the southern end of the street (\*Tirumañjana vīdhi). Tyāgarāja returned home and discovered to his horror what had taken place.

This incident happened before the partition between the brothers took place. The Bhōgi Paṇḍigai quarrel has since become a proverbial saying amongst the relatives of Tyāgarāja.

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\*This street is called Tirumanjana vidhi because the Deity of the local temple is taken to that bathing ghat during the festival, Ani Tirumanjanam.

It was Tyāgarāja's practice to return home the moment the Uñchavritti vessel became full (with rice). He went to the different parts of Tiruvaiyār and suburbs for Uñchavritti. In his earlier years, he was not accompanied by many śiṣyas as was the case later in his life.

When he lost the idol, he sang the pathetic song *Endu dāgi nāḍo*. The opening music of this song reveals the mental anguish of the composer. Pieces like *Nēnendu veta-kudurā* (Karnāṭaka byāg) were also composed on this occasion. He lost interest in his life at Tiruvaiyār. The news of the loss of the idol spread everywhere. His śiṣyas invited him to come and stay in their respective places just for diversion. For the S'ivarātri pūja he went to Mānambuchāvaḍi in Tanjore and stayed with his disciple, Mānambuchāvaḍi Veñkaṭasubbayyar. For the Paṅguni Uttiram festival he went to Tiruvārūr. He returned back to Tiruvaiyār for the Saptasthānam festival. He had a dream wherein he was told the precise location of the lost Idol on the Kāvēri bed. He rushed to the place and found the Idol at the very spot mentioned in the dream. The vigraha proper was first found and the Tiruvās'i (the ornamental arch over the head of the Idol) was found at another neighbouring spot. The Idol luckily for us, got stuck up in the mire in the bed. He was all joy when he got back the idol and returned home in great ecstasy. Thus he was without his favourite Idol for a couple of months.

At the spot at which the Idol was thrown, Rāmuḍu Bhāgavatar (the great grand-son of Tyāgarāja's elder brother) lost a son. The son accidentally fell in the river at that very spot and got drowned. People came to know of it only when his body was found there, later on.

## CHAPTER X

### PILGRIMAGE TO KANCHI, TIRUPATI AND OTHER PLACES

#### *Kāñchīpuram.*

Upaniṣad Brahman of Kāñchīpuram wrote a S'rimukham (letter) to Tyāgarāja about the year 1834 inviting him to his place. The contents of the letter, translated and reproduced below, speak for themselves :

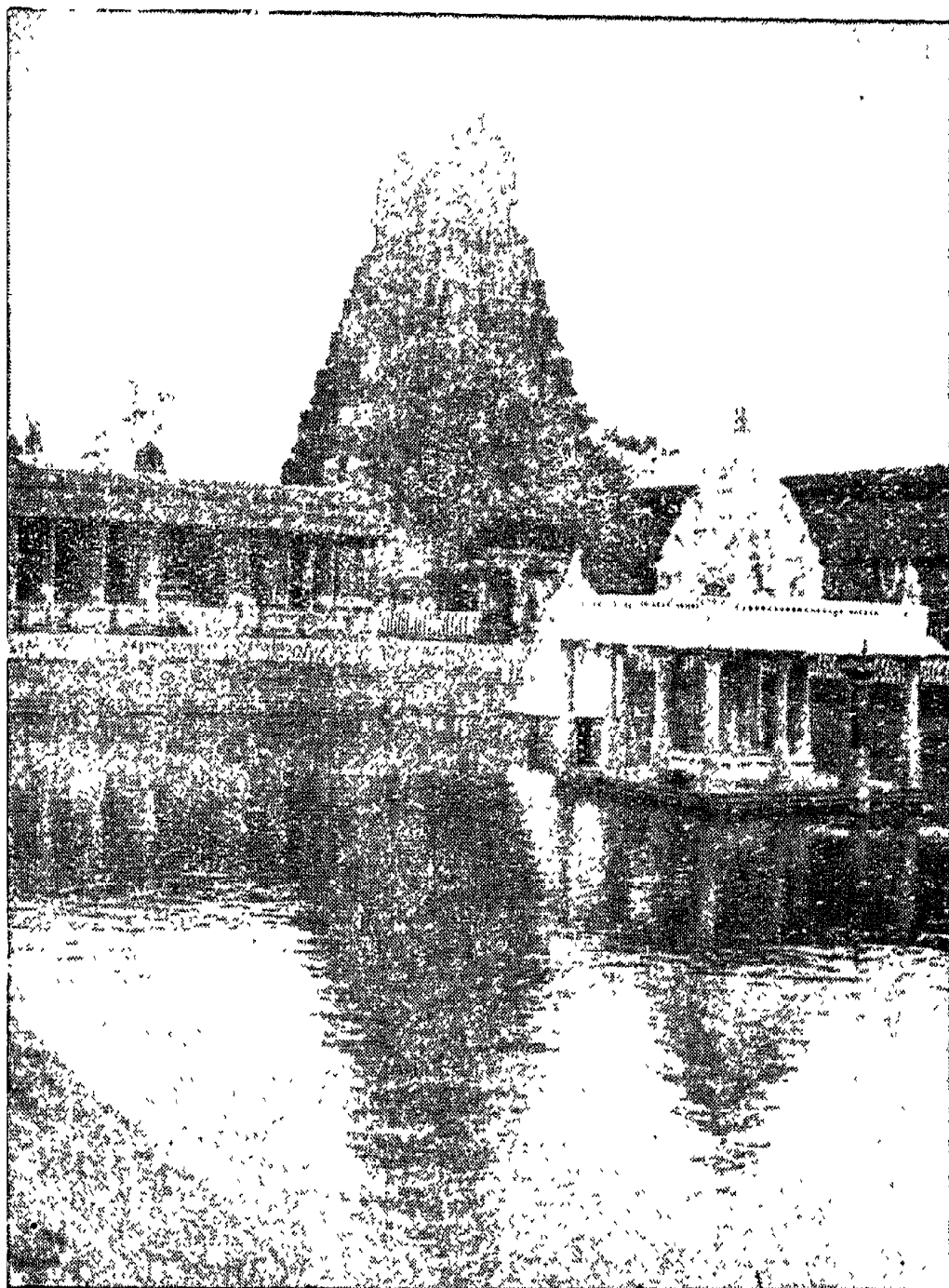
To Tyāgarāja,

“Blessings. In my pūrvāsrama, your father and I were Sahapāṭis (disciples of the same master) and bosom friends. I have heard through many, your brilliant compositions and am desirous of seeing you. I am past 100 years of age and hence cannot come to Tiruvaiyār to see you. I trust, you will come to Kāñchī, stay as my guest and receive the Grace of Lord Varadarāja.”

It may be mentioned that the Sage Upaniṣad Brahman has written a commentary on the 108 Upaniṣads. This commentary has now been published by the Theosophical Society, Adyar, Madras. In the Upaniṣad Brahmēndra Maṭh in Kāñchīpuram, one can see even now, a valuable collection of Palm-leaf Manuscripts.

Upaniṣad Brahman was famous for his exposition of the Upaniṣads. He lived for 115 years.

PLATE VI



Temple of Varadarāja, Kāñchīpuram — View of  
the Gōpuram, tank and the 1000-pillared Hall.



When Tyāgarāja made known his decision, that he was going to honour the invitation of Upaniṣad Brahmam and visit Kāñchī, many disciples requested the Master to include visits to some of the other important places during the course of the journey. An itinerary was chalked out. The Master was carried in a Palanquin by his siṣyas. Of the senior disciples who accompanied him during this historic pilgrimage were Tanjore Rāma Rāo, Wālājāpeṭ Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar, Tillasthānam Rāma Ayyaṅgār and Sojiri Sītārāmayya. Some disciples went in advance to make arrangements for the sojourn of the Party. Umaiyālṭpuram Kṛṣṇa Bhāgavatar and Sundara Bhāgavatar became disciples of Tyāgarāja after his return to Tiruvaīyār from this pilgrimage. Wālājāpeṭ Kṛṣṇasvāmi Bhāgavatar and Kañjira vidvān Rādhākṛṣṇa Ayyar became disciples during this trip.

Tyāgarāja came to Kāñchipuram and stayed as the honoured guest of Upaniṣad Brahmam for some days. His bhajanas were largely attended and every one felt a devotional thrill by listening to his songs. The feeling that they had been cleansed of all dirt came over everyone who heard his music. The songs *Varadarāja* (Svarabhūṣaṇi rāga) and *Varadanavanitās'a* (Rāgapañjaram) were composed by him in praise of Lord Varadarājā during this visit.

#### *Walajapet.*

Next he visited Wālājāpeṭ. There he stayed for 12 days and conducted Bhajanas in the Bhajana Mandiram of Wālājāpeṭ Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar. The citizens of the place rendered signal honour to the Great Composer. On the last day of his stay in Walajapet, he was taken in a grand procession. Mysore Sadās'iva Rao who was at that time a



disciple under Walajapet Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavataṛ, has immortalized the event in a beautiful Kṛiti in Tōḍi rāga, beginning with the words, "*Tyāgarājasvāmi veḍalina*".

### *Tirupati.*

Tyāgarāja then visited Tirupati. In his days there was no Motor road to go up the Tirupati hills and pilgrims had to walk all the seven miles on the hill steps to reach the top. He and his party started ascending early in the morning and it was about 11 a.m. when they reached the top. Tyāgarāja in his excessive desire to have darṣan of the Lord of the Seven Hills, immediately went to the sacred tank, had his bath, finished his customary prayers and rushed to the temple. The other members of the party were slowly getting ready to come to the temple. When he came near the *sanctum sanctorum* he was disappointed to find the hanging screen preventing him from having darṣan of the Lord. He thought that his own pride had taken the form of the screen and prevented him from having the darṣana. In great humility, he sang the song "*Tera tiyyaga rādā*" in Gaṇipantu rāga - Ādi tāḷa. The opening bars of the piece reveal clearly the distressed state of his mind. When he concluded the song, the screen fell asunder as if by a miracle, and he saw Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in all His Glory. He was overjoyed beyond all description and immediately burst forth into the song "*Veṅkaṭeśa ninnu*" in Madhyamā-vati rāga - Ādi tāḷa. The Pallavi translated would mean "One needs a 10,000 eyes to behold you! Oh Veṅkaṭeśa!" In the meantime, devotees had gathered in large numbers and witnessed this miracle. The temple archakas also came and honoured the composer. It was only then that people came to know that it was the great Tyāgarāja that had come there.

*Puttūr* (Dead man brought back to life).

He left Tirupati. One early morning he happened to pass by Puttūr. (Puttur is a Railway Station between Tiruttani and Rēṇiguṇṭa on the Madras - Bombay Line). There he found a number of people gathered round a dead body with a lady and a child in deep mourning. On enquiry he came to know, that a certain pilgrim came to the place the previous night along with his wife and son and knocked at the doors of all the houses to rest over night. But none of the people opened the doors of their houses. They suspected that it was a tiger that was knocking. (Even now the jungle near Puttūr is infested with tigers). The Pilgrim decided to take shelter in the village temple for the night. As it was late in the night, the temple gates were bolted from within by the watchman. The Pilgrim decided to scale the temple wall and after entering inside, thought of opening the door from within and sleep in the temple along with his family. It was pitch dark and as misfortune would have it, when he scaled the wall and got down on the other side he fell into the adjoining well and got drowned. The wife anxiously and patiently waited for her husband. She became restless when there was no trace of him. It was nearing mid-night and for fear of attack and molestation, she did not even raise an alarm. Due to exhaustion, she slept.

The temple gates were opened the next morning. The temple servants were horrified to find the dead body of the lady's husband in the well. They had it removed and brought outside the temple. The villagers had subsequently gathered and were offering condolences to the lady on her sad plight. It was just at that time that Tyāgarāja's party happened to pass by that place.

The Great Composer was very much moved at the sap-  
plight of the bereaved lady. He came to know that the name  
of the person who got drowned was Sēṣayya. He found a  
Tuḷasi-maṇi hāram round his neck. (It is worn only by pious  
men). Tyāgarāja asked his disciples to sing the Kṛiti, “*Nā  
jivādhārā*” (Bilahari rāga - Ādi tāḷa) At the conclusion of  
the piece, he sprinkled tuḷasi tīrtham, *i.e.* water in which  
ocymum sanctum was soaked. Immediately the dead man  
came back to life and woke up, as if from sleep. All were  
surprised at this modern miracle. Sēṣayya prostrated before  
Tyāgarāja and received his blessings and resumed his  
pilgrimage.

This is the only occasion when Tyāgarāja put to test his  
spiritual powers. Bilahari rāga itself is a life-giver and  
appropriately enough its gāna kāla is morning. It is the idea  
that people should start work for the day by singing a piece  
in a rāga which will give joy, courage and enthusiasm. The  
Kṛiti, “*Nā jivādhārā*” starts with *magana*, a life-giver and it  
has the quintessence of the Bilahari rāga in it. When such a  
piece was sung and the tuḷasi tīrtham from the hand of  
Tyāgarāja was sprinkled over the body, the life which was  
in a state of suspended animation naturally came back.

#### *Shōlinghur.*

At Sholinghur, he sang the Kritis, “*Narasimha nanu  
brōvavē*” (Bilahari rāga - Chāpu tāḷa) and “*Srī Nārasimha  
mām pāhi*” (Phalarañjani rāga - Dēsādi tāḷa) in praise of  
Lakṣmī Narasimha Svami, the presiding Deity of the place.  
He sang “*Pāhi Rāmadūta*” (Ṣaḍvidhamārgiṇi rāga - Rūpaka  
tāḷa) in praise of Āñjanēya, in the Āñjanēya shrine at  
Sholinghur.

The song in Bilahari rāga - Chāpu tāla "*Nivēgāni nan-nevaru gāturā*" was composed in praise of the Deity of a Viṣṇu sthala on the banks of the *Svarṇamukhi* river running by the side of Kālahasti.

#### *Madras.*

Kōvūr Sundara Mudaliyār, a wealthy citizen of Madras at that time, was a disciple of Upaniṣad Brahman of Kāñchīpuram. He was a friend of Viṇa Kuppayyar. When Tyāgarāja visited Kāñchīpuram, Kōvūr Sundara Mudaliyār was introduced to him by Upaniṣad Brahman. At the suggestion of Upaniṣad Brahman, Tyāgarāja agreed to visit Madras and stay as the guest of Sundara Mudaliyār for some time. Sundara Mudaliyār's \*palatial residence was situated in No. 4, Bunder Street, George Town, Madras. Tyāgarāja stayed there as the honoured guest of Sundara Mudaliyār and expounded the Dēvagāndhāri rāga for 8 days in succession. During the first six days, at the conclusion of each stage of the ālāpana, he sang one of his own Kritis in Dēvagāndhāri rāga. On 7th and 8th days he sang a pallavi in this rāga and followed it up with niraval and kalpana svaras. It was a veritable feast to the ears of saṅgīta vidvāns and rasikas who came to listen to him at that time.

While in Madras, Tyāgarāja visited the Pārthasāradhisvāmi Temple in Triplicane and composed a Kṛiti, in praise of the Deity. This piece is in Tōḍi rāga - Jhampa tāla and begins with the words: "*Svāri vedalina Pārthasāradhini ganarē*".

\*This bungalow was with the Mudaliar family till the year 1870. Afterwards it was sold and now it belongs to the M. O. P. Charities. In the place of the old bungalow one can see there now only a row of shops.

*Tiruvottiyūr.*

At the request of his disciple, Viṇa Kuppaiyyar, Tyāgarāja visited Tiruvottiyūr, a holy place six miles to the North of Madras. This place has been hallowed by the visits of Āḍi S'aṅkarāchārya (7th cent. A. D.), Tirugñana Sambandar, Appar, Sundaramūrti Nāyanār and Paṭṭinattār. When Tyāgarāja came near the shrine of Tripurasundari, he was captivated by the *Sāmmidhyam* of the place and he sang the new famous *Tiruvottiyūr Pañcharatnam*.

The 5 pieces belonging to this Pañcharatnam are :

<i>Sundari nī divya</i>	- Kalyāṇi
<i>Sundari nannindarilō</i>	- Bēgaḍa
<i>Dārini telusukonṭi</i>	- S'uddha sāveri
<i>Sundari ninu varṇimpa</i>	- Ārabhi
<i>Kanna talli</i>	- Sāvēri

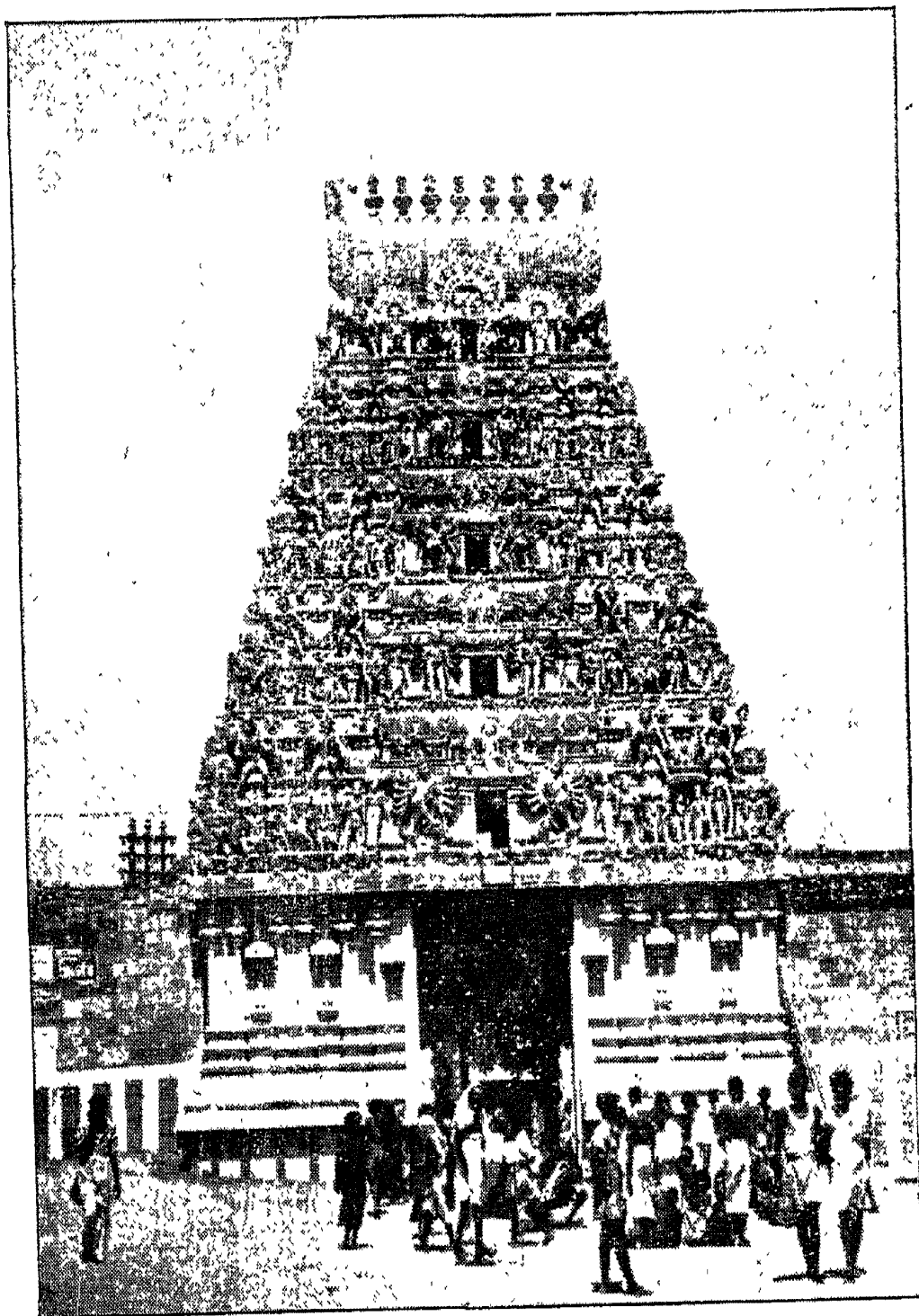
All the five pieces bear the stamp of maturity of his musical conception.

*Kōvūr.*

At the request of Kōvūr Sundara Mudaliyār, Tyāgarāja visited Kōvūr, a place 13½ miles to the west of Madras. This is a beautiful village and contains an ancient shrine. Sunda-rēs'vara is the name of the God and Soundaryanāyaki the name of the Goddess. Tyāgarāja sang the *Kōvūr Pañcharatnam* here.

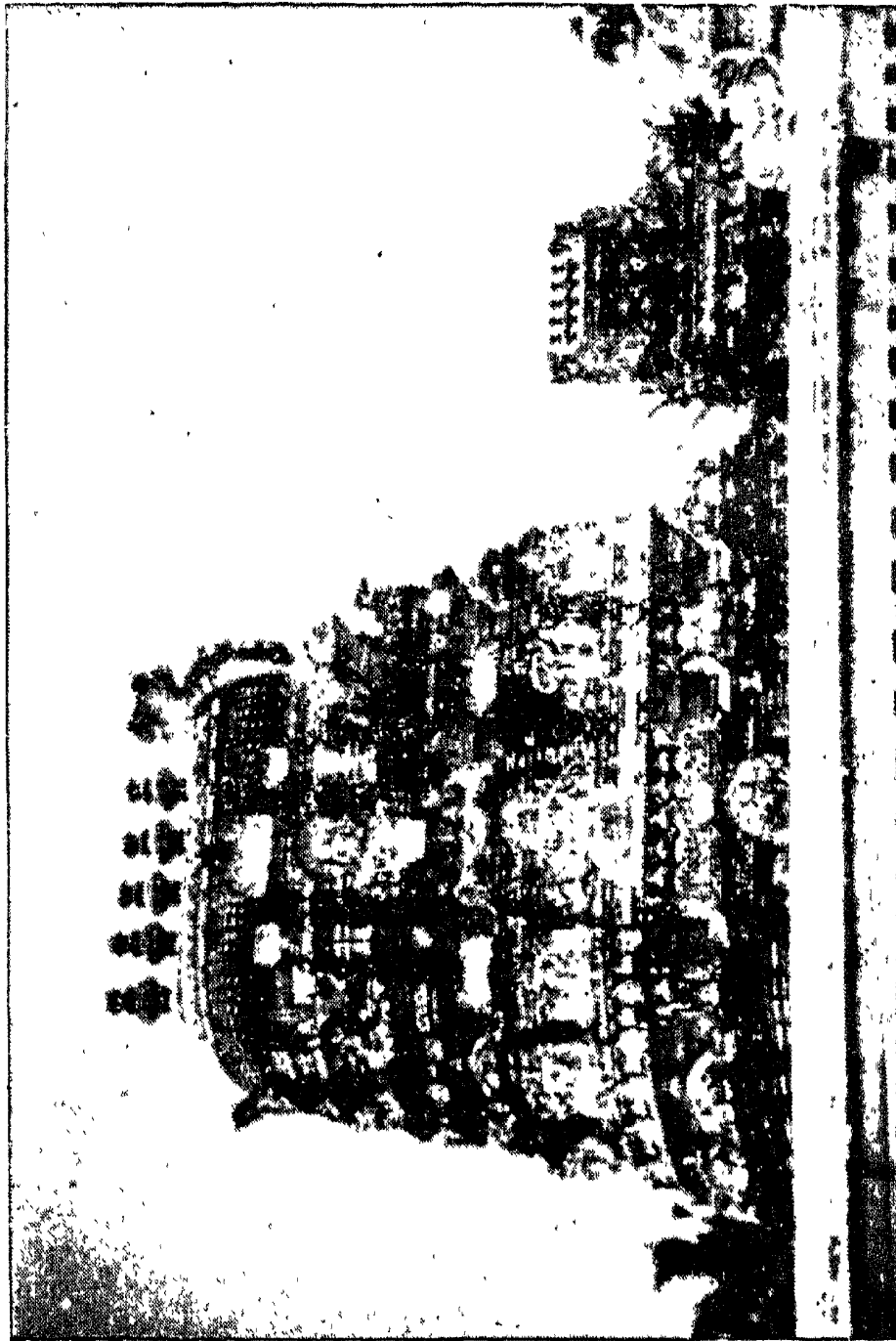
The 5 Pieces constituting this group are :

<i>Sambhō Mahādēva</i>	- Pantuvarāli
<i>Ī vasudha nīvaṇṭi</i>	- Sahānā
<i>Kōri sēvimpa rārē</i>	- Kharaharapriya
<i>Nammi vachchina</i>	- Kalyāṇi
<i>Sundarēsvaruni</i>	- S'aṅkarabharāṇa



Tiruvottiyūr temple — Eastern Gōpuram

PLATE VIII



Kōvūr Temple — The Vimāna over the Shrine of Sundarēs'vara.

*The Thief Incident.*

After visiting Kōvūr, Tyāgarāja and his Party commenced their return journey to Tiruvaiyār. Kōvūr Sundara Mudaliyār out of great devotion to the Composer, placed a bag containing 1,000 gold pieces (ஆயிரம் பொன்கள்) in his palanquin and without the knowledge of Tyāgarāja. He told his disciples, that the sum was intended for being utilized for Rāma navami, S'rī Jayanti and Vaikuṇṭha Ēkādaśi festivals and that they should not refuse to take it. The disciples kept quiet when they were told that the amount was intended for being spent for the festivals.

In the course of the journey, the party had to pass through a jungle one night. The place was infested by the wellknown Nāgalāpuram thieves. They were noted for their skill in inflicting injuries on passers-by with pebbles (கூழாங்கல்) shot from catapults. Tyāgarāja and his Party were surrounded by these robbers. When the disciples whispered into Tyāgarāja's ears, that thieves had come, he said :—

“Why should we be afraid of them? What is it that we have, for them to molest us and steal ?”

Viṇa Kuppayyar whispered that in the palanquin was the bag containing 1,000 gold pieces given by Sundara Mudaliyār.

“Throw it away to the thieves” was Tyāgarāja's reply.

Tanjore Rāma Rao immediately intervened and said, “No Master ! That money was given for being spent during the Rāma navami, S'rī Jayanti and Vaikuṇṭha Ēkādaśi festivals. It is God's money and we have no right to throw it away to the robbers.”

“If it is God's money, let Him take care of it. Why should we bother about it”? said Tyāgarāja.



So saying he was plunged in meditation. After a few minutes he sang the song "*Mundu venaka niru*" (Darbār rāga - Ādi tāḷa)—The pallavi reminds one of the s'lōka,

*Agrata : prṣṭataschaiva pārs'vatas'cha Mahābalau*

*Ākarṇapūrṇa dhanvānau Rakṣyetam Rāma Lakṣmaṇau.*

The purport of the song is "Oh Rāma! the slayer of Mura and Khara! Come, come with Lakṣmaṇa quickly to our rescue." Immediately two lads appeared on the scene and rained arrows on the robbers. They got frightened and ran away to a distance. The two lads subsequently came near the palanquin. They whispered "The Robber menace is over" and disappeared. Tyāgarāja peeped out and enquired of the disciples who the whisperers were. They were not able to give any satisfactory answer.

The procession was moving all the time and at day break, the party came to a village and halted in a choultry. The inquisitive thieves stupefied at the sight of the heroic lads, were accompanying the party from a respectable distance. At dawn, they reverentially came near Tyāgarāja and asked, who those two lads were, who rained arrows on them and terrified them.

Tyāgarāja inferred that they must be only Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa and in great ecstasy sang the song "*Enta bhāgyamō*" (Sāraṅga rāga - Ādi tāḷa). The anupallavi of this song refers to the fact, how the Lord came and spoke to him and freed him from the menace. Tyāgarāja praised the thieves in that they had the supreme fortune to see the Divine lads. He gave them *Rāma nāma upa-dēsa*. The thieves turned a new chapter in their lives, gave up their unsocial acts and became good people later on.

## CHAPTER XI

### TYAGARAJA'S DISCIPLES AND SISHYA PARAMPARA

TYAGARAJA possessed the largest number of disciples known to have been associated with any single composer in India's musical history. These disciples as well as the disciples of these disciples became distinguished composers or musicians. Almost all the important luminaries in the music of the post-Tyāgarāja period will be found to belong to Tyāgarāja's *śiṣya parampara* (line of disciples).

The disciples of Tyāgarāja learnt their master's compositions with great zeal and enthusiasm. Some of them were already *pallavi vidvāns* at the time of the commencement of their tutelage under him. All of them learnt his scholarly compositions with avidity and devotion. Some specialized in his *Divyanāma kīrtanas*. Disciples like Viṇa Kuppayyar and Walajapet Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar served under the Great Composer for many years. Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar, being a man of learning and well versed in Samskr̥t and Telugu, acted as a scribe to the great bard of Tiruvaiyār and earned his love and blessings. All the disciples had a reverential regard for their master. They were conscious of his greatness and felt the divine spark within him. They saw in him a messenger from God, come to this world to contribute to human happiness by his musical compositions of unparalleled beauty. His radiant personality beaming with spiritual greatness left an indelible impression on their minds. It was indeed a

rare privilege for any one to have sat at the feet of the Apostle of Absolute music and learn his compositions.

Tyāgarāja paired off his disciples according to the pitch, timbre, compass, responsive character and capacity of their voices and taught to each pair not more than 200 kritis. Thus he distributed his thousands of compositions amongst the several pairs of his disciples. A shrewd teacher that he was, he realized that that number (of kritis) was perhaps the upper limit to the retentive capacity of the average human memory. In his days, the art of printing had not yet come to South India. The only way then to ensure the remembrance of the correct renderings of the kritis was by frequently repeating them. The cleverer disciples were however allowed and encouraged to learn more pieces either from the Great Composer himself or from other senior disciples. It is thus that the Walajapet disciples and the Umaiyaḷpuram disciples came to have a rich repertoire of Tyāgarāja's compositions.

In his earlier days, when pupils without a good grounding in svarajñānam came, Tyāgarāja, himself took them through a course in graded *Divyanāma kīrtanas* and thus prepared them for his more advanced compositions. In later years, however, when pupils without svarajñānam came to him, he sent them to another musician to undergo the preparatory course. After the preliminary course they came to him for lessons in kritis. The first kriti that Tyāgarāja invariably taught to his disciples was "*Srī Jānaki manōharā*" in Īśamanōhari rāga. The Umayalpuram disciples followed in the footsteps of their master when in their turn they taught this piece first to the disciples who came to learn under them.

Many people profited by the classes that Tyāgarāja conducted for his disciples in the evenings. There are manuscripts containing the songs of Tyāgarāja in some skeleton notation, giving mnemonical clues for their rāgas and tālas, and written during the composer's life-time. An examination of these manuscripts reveals that a number of his valuable compositions have not yet seen the limelight of publicity.

Tyāgarāja *did have* the necessity for a large number of disciples. They not only recorded those compositions which flowed down his mouth during his moments of inspiration, but also taught them in their turn to others. Some disciples provided the drone (Tambura) accompaniment and others the rhythmic (mridaṅga and jālra) accompaniment in his house bhajanas and street (Uñchavritti) bhajanas. Good-voiced disciples sang during those bhajanas. It is only those that perform bhajanas that can realize the valuable help of competent singers and accompanists in this form of musical worship. Some disciples fetched flowers for their guru's daily pūja, and yet others looked after his household work. None of them paid any fee. On the other hand, they obtained from the Great Composer his hearty blessings, and it is this grace, that sustained them later on in their lives.

Not a day passed without his composing a piece or two. On Ēkāḍasi days when he was lost in spiritual ecstasy, more pieces came out of him. The vidvān disciples faithfully recorded those compositions in notation which otherwise would have been lost to humanity. It was a thrilling experience for the disciples to listen to the new creations of their master: each time. If some of the

disciples stayed with their master for a number of years and if some of them were his life-long disciples, it is due to the fact that the attraction to learn his newly composed pieces was too strong for them to resist. The great reciter of 96 crores of Rām Nām, (an achievement without a parallel in the life-histories of bhaktas of India) loved his disciples and was intensely fond of them—a rare quality found only in persons of his eminence. Towards the latter part of his life, the number of his compositions had reached such a staggering number, that by way of recapitulating them, he asked the disciples who had specialised in them to give complete recitals of them according to a planned programme. With the exception of his favourite pieces which he asked his disciples to sing frequently in his bhajanas, he perhaps heard his other pieces only once during a year.

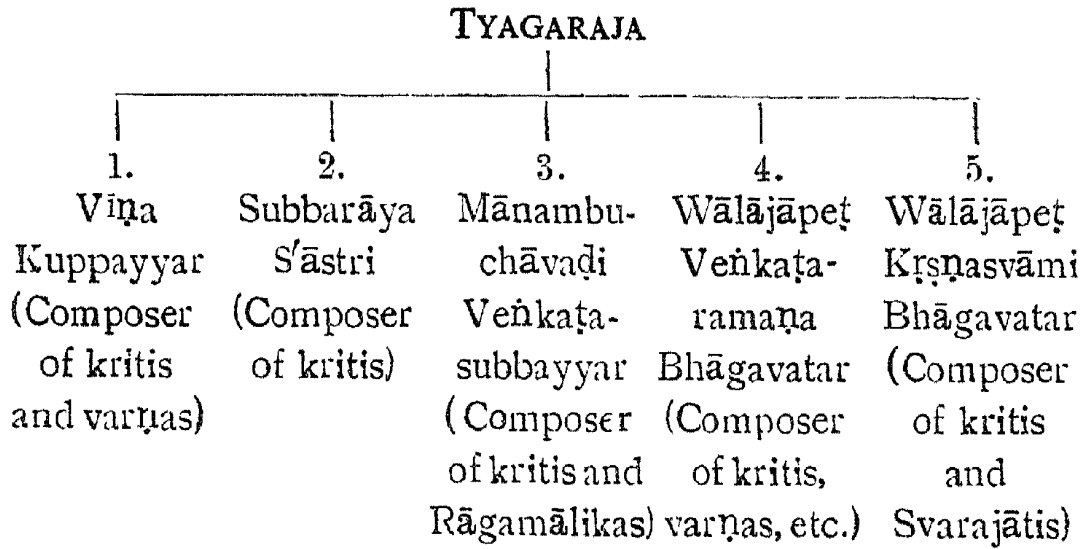
Among the disciples of Tyāgarāja, Tanjore Rama Rao was the senior most in age and he was practically the Great Composer's private secretary. He planned out his itineraries and accompanied him during his tours. He accompanied Tyāgarāja during his famous trip to the North, covering Kāñchīpuram, Tirupati, Wālājāpet, Sholinghur, Madras, Tiruvottiyūr and Kōvūr. He was able to move with his master with a certain amount of freedom. For this reason, the other siṣyas used to refer to him as Chinna Tyāgarāja. Whenever they desired something to be communicated to their master, they did so through Tanjore Rāma Rao. Rāma Rao was younger than Tyāgarāja by two years. It may be interesting to know, that the disciples used to refer to Wālājāpet Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavata as Gaṇapati since he was somewhat stout and strong. Whenever work involving physical labour had to

be done by the disciples, they invariably entrusted it to 'Gaṇapati'. That Tyāgarāja was never referred to by name but by the dignified appellation of 'Ayyarvāl' is proof of the fact that the Great Composer was held in high esteem by his disciples, admirers and the general public.

Tyāgarāja's disciples may be grouped under three heads:—

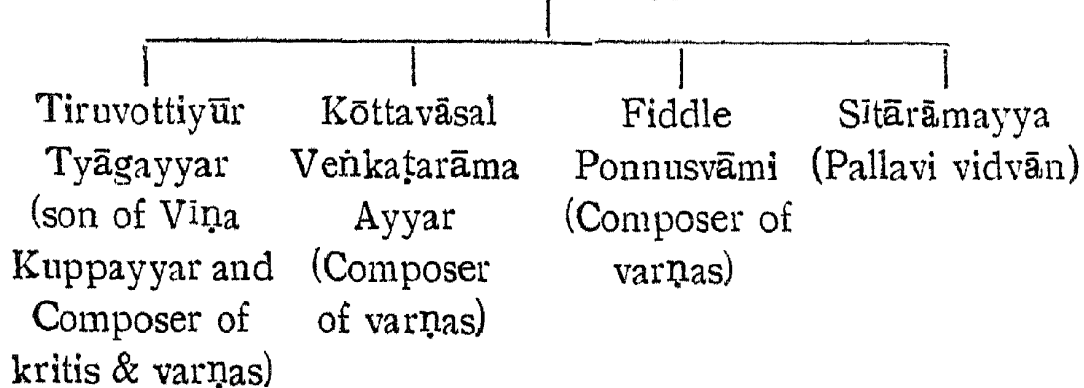
(Only the more prominent of his direct disciples and the deceased members of his siṣya parampara are referred to here).

I. *Those who became composers.*

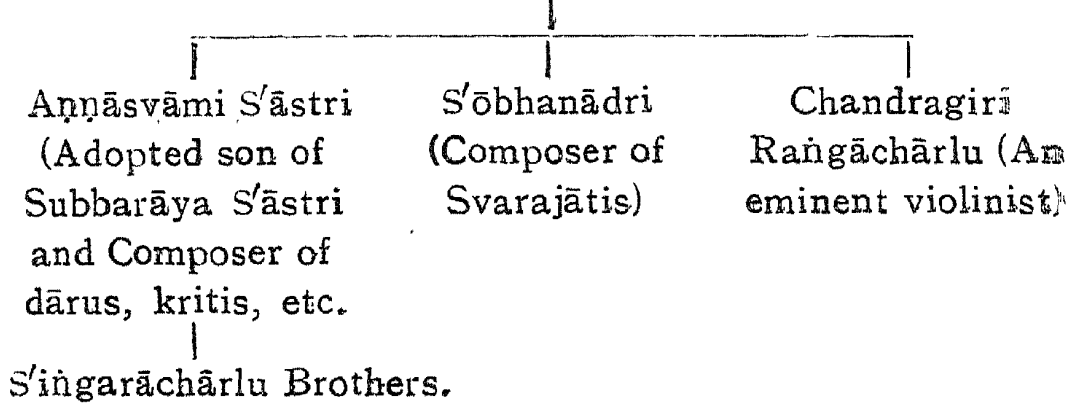


**SISHYA PARAMPARA**

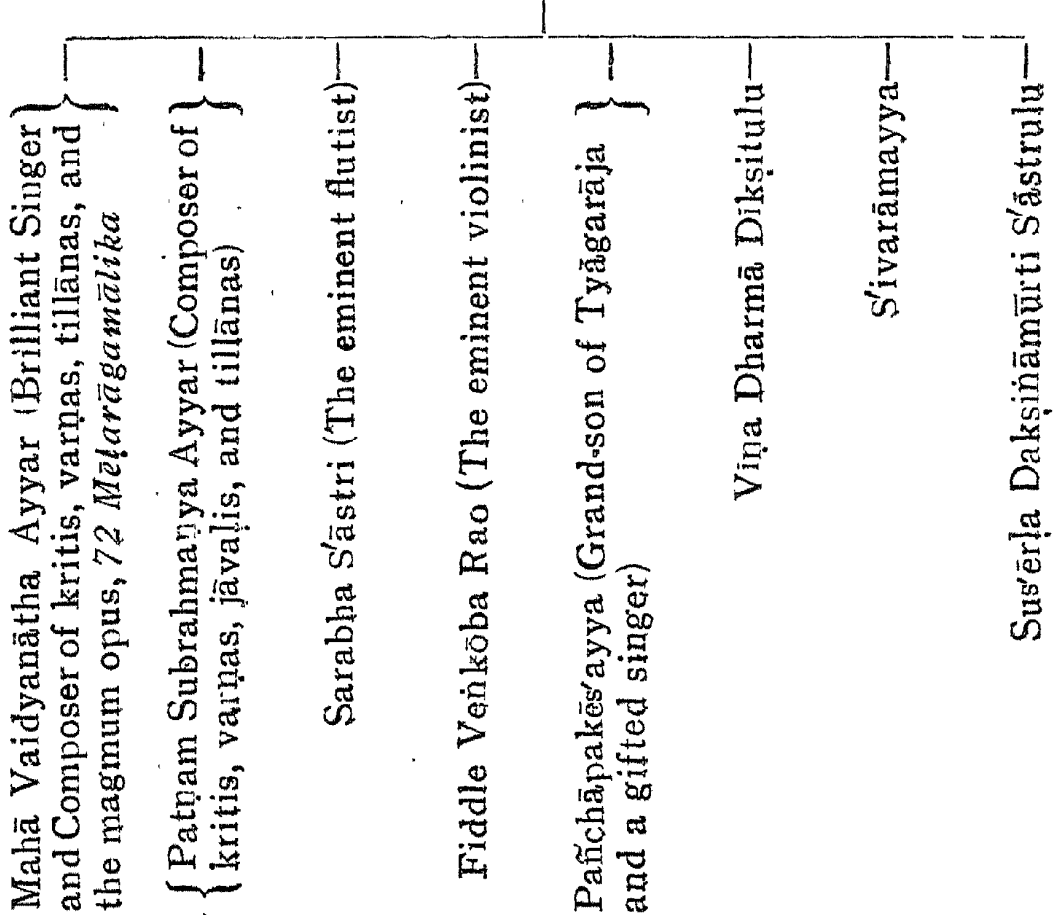
1. Viṇa Kuppayyar



## 2. Subbarāya S'āstri



## 3. Mānambuchāvaḍi Veṅkaṭasubbayyar



Rāmanāthapuram S'rīnivāsa Ayyaṅgār  
(Composer of kritis, varṇas, jāvalis and tillānas)

PLATE IX



Arupattumūvar — The above is a Photograph of the beautiful painting of the 63 Tamil Saints of South India, in Mahā Vaidyanātha Ayyar's house in Tiruvaiyār and to which he offered worship.





4. Wālājāpēṭ Venkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar

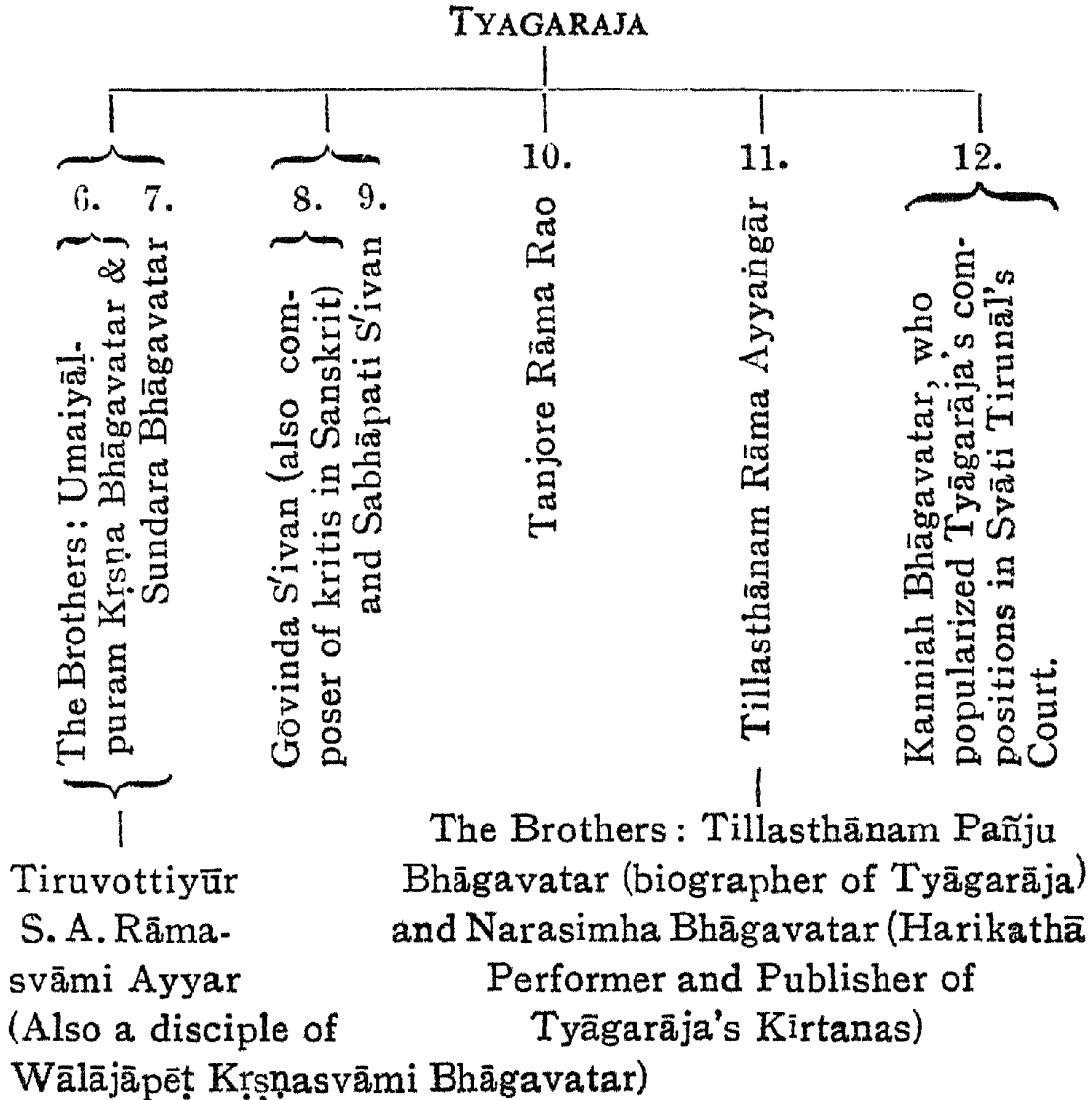
Mysore Sadās'iva Rao (Composer of kritis and varṇas)

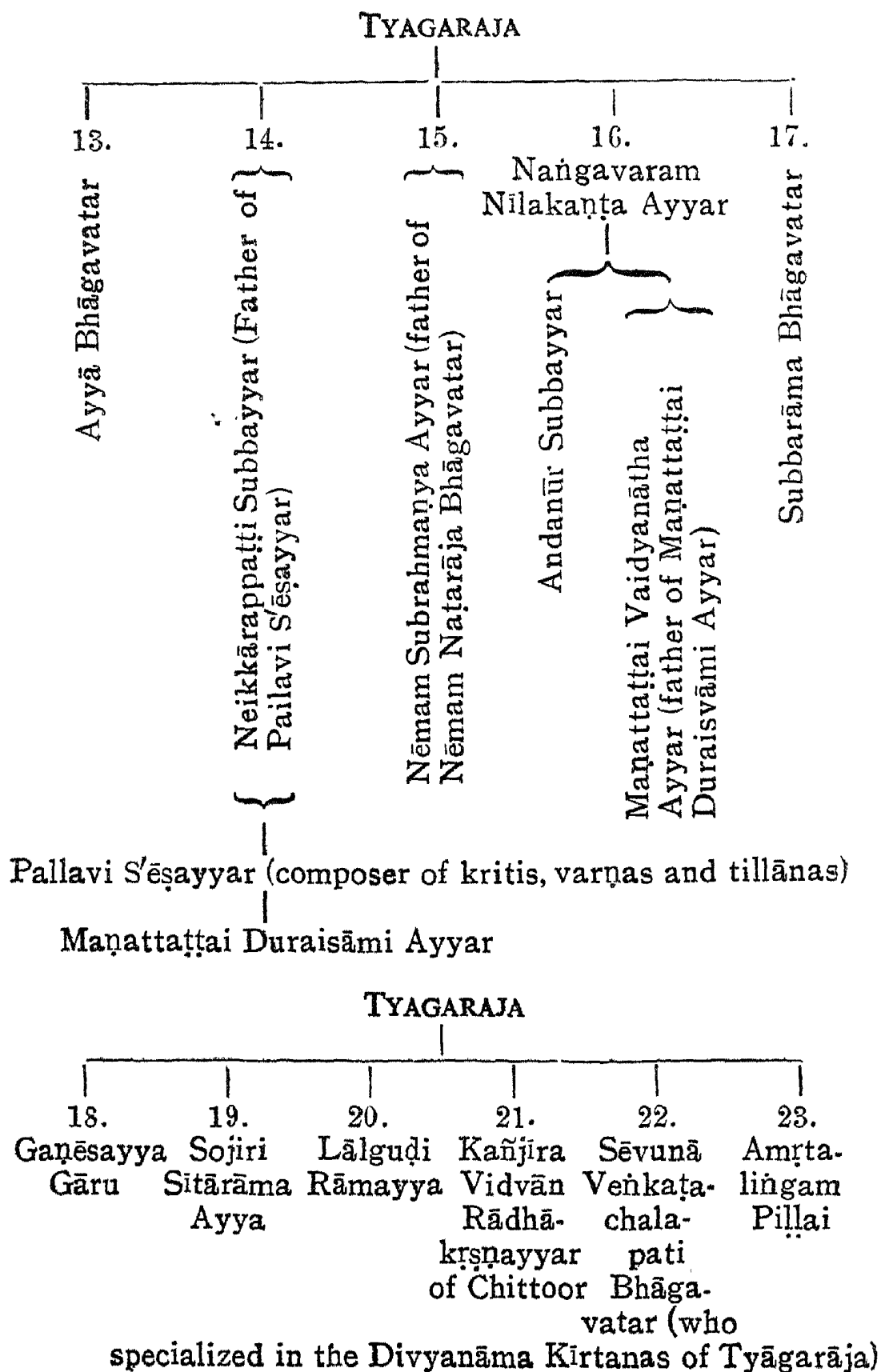
5. Wālājāpēṭ Kṛṣṇasvāmi Bhāgavatar

Tiruvottiyūr S. A. Rāmāsvāmi Ayyar

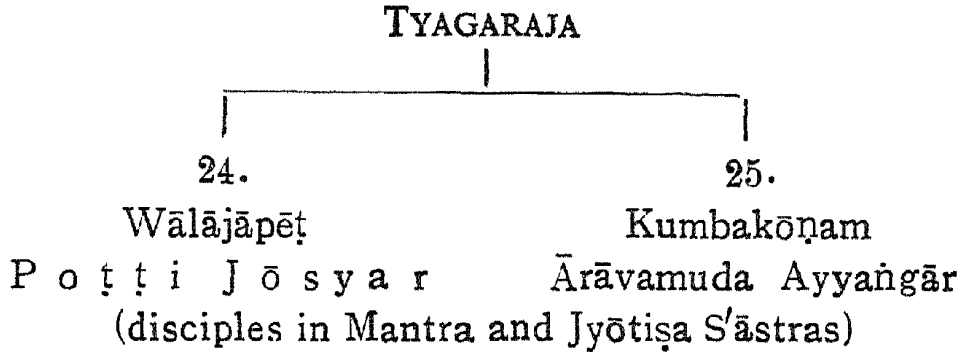
(The first scholar to publish the complete works of Tyāgarāja under the nom-de-plume (Rāmānanda Yōgigāl))

II. *Those who became good performers.*





III. *Other disciples.*



The disciples of Tyāgarāja proved themselves worthy of their great Guru. Their disciples and their disciples' disciples in their turn have by their brilliant attainments and splendid compositions proved themselves worthy members of the great line.

CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO THE DISCIPLESHIP OF  
SOME OF HIS SISHYAS

*Wālājāpēṭ Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar.*

The circumstances that led to the discipleship of Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar under Tyāgarāja are interesting. Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar originally lived in Ayyampeṭ in Tanjore District. When young, he used to go to Tiruvaīyār every day to attend the bhajanas of Tyāgarāja. The irrepressible desire arose within him that he must do some kind of service (*kaiṅkaryam*) to the Great Composer. Every morning he brought plenty of Tuḷasi (*ocymum sanctum*) and kept the same in the pial of the house of the Great Composer for his pūja. The disciples took the same to the pūja room. Tyāgarāja thus had plenty of Tuḷasi every morning for his pūja. One day as misfortune would have it, Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar fell ill and there was no Tuḷasi for the pūja that day. Tyāgarāja enquired why there was no Tuḷasi that day and

the disciples narrated that one young man from Ayyampeṭ used to bring it every morning and that he had not come that day. Tyāgarāja was all along under the impression that the Tulasi was brought by one of his own siṣyas. He expressed a desire to meet the young man. Next day Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar who had recovered from his illness, brought Tulasi as usual and he was immediately taken to the Great Composer. The Great Composer was touched by his devotion and from that time onwards he began to teach him his songs. The Bhāgavatar continued the Tulasi kainkaryam right through his life and his son also continued it when he became the disciple of the Bard of Tiruvaiyār.

*Umaiyaḷpuram Kṛṣṇa Bhāgavatar and  
Sundara Bhāgavatar.*

These two brothers belonged to a family of eight brothers. The eldest of them was Veṅgu Bhāgavatar. Veṅgu Bhāgavatar was a Vyākaraṇa vidvān and a scholar in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. He read and expounded the *Rāmāyaṇa* in the presence of Tyāgarāja in Tiruvaiyār, day after day and completed it in a period of six months. Tyāgarāja was impressed with his learning and powers of exposition and paid a tribute to him. Veṅgu Bhāgavatar requested Tyāgarājā to teach music to his two younger brothers, Kṛṣṇan and Sundaram who were then lads of 10 and 8 years of age respectively. With the magnanimity characteristic of him, Tyāgarāja readily said "Bring them tomorrow itself. I shall start giving lessons."

The two brothers were taken the next day to the Great Composer and the first song taught by him to them was "*Srī Jānakimanōharā*" in Īs'amanōhari rāga. From the 10th to the 22nd year, Kṛṣṇa Bhāgavatar and his brother were

under Tyāgarāja's tutelage. Veṅgu Bhāgavatar's son was Umaiyaḷpuram Sāmi Bhāgavatar.

When people without good grounding in music came to Tyāgarāja to learn his kritis, he first sent them to one *Jagadrakṣaka Bhāgavatar* in Āḍuturai to receive training in the Abhyāsa gāna exercises, comprising Saralis, Alaṅkāras, Gītas and Varṇas. They learnt under him for a period of 5 to 6 months and then came to Tyāgarāja to learn the Kritis directly from him. Umaiyaḷpuram Kṛṣṇa Bhāgavatar and Sundara Bhāgavatar also received training under Jagadrakṣaka Bhāgavatar for a period of 6 months.

As already mentioned, when the Umaiyaḷpuram disciples started their studies under Tyāgarāja, the latter had already returned from his historic Pilgrimage to Kāñchīpuram, Tirupati and other places.

*Kaṇḍīra vidvān Rādhākṛṣṇa Ayyar of Chittoor.*

Tyāgarāja, as already mentioned on p. 91 visited Kāñchīpuram at the request of the Sage, Upaniṣad Brahmam. One day he was performing Bhajana at the Upanishad Brahmendra Maṭh. Kaṇḍīra vidvān Rādhākṛṣṇa Ayyar was present there with his Kaṇḍīra. He was not introduced to the Great Composer and was sitting quietly at one corner. He was very much captivated by the spiritual and musical atmosphere of the place. The songs sung were so fascinating that he was tempted to provide rhythmic accompaniment on his Kaṇḍīra. But the fear was there that Tyāgarāja and his disciples may not relish his play. He hesitated for a while and at last mustered courage and began to play mildly on his instrument. Since he had a nice touch on the instrument, and

since his delicate play harmonized with the music, nobody objected to his play. Some even began to appreciate his play. He slowly increased the intensity of his play. After some time Tyāgarāja himself turned round to see the person who was playing on the Kañjira. He expressed approval of his play and from that time onwards, Rādhākṛṣṇa Ayyar became a disciple of Tyāgarāja. He provided Kañjira accompaniment during Tyāgarāja's subsequent bhajanas. Rādhākṛṣṇa Ayyar's play was not only pleasing but was characterized by high class technique.

### *Sojiri Sītārāmayya.*

Soriji Sītārāmayya (also called Pallavi Sītārāmayya and Soldier Sītārāmayya) and Pallavi Duraisāmi Ayyar were so puffed up with their attainments and talents in music that at first they did not regard Tyāgarāja with the veneration due to him. They thought that he was only a composer and not capable of superb flights in the realm of manōdharma saṅgīta. One night Tyāgarāja was sitting on the pial of his house and was developing the Saurāṣṭra rāga in a detailed manner. These two musicians happened to pass by Tyāgarāja's house at that time and listened to his ālāpana. The ālāpana was so captivating and so refreshingly original that they sat on the pial of a neighbouring house and continued to listen to his lofty flights in this rāga. Tyāgarāja continued his ālāpana and tāna for many hours and till late in the night. The two vidvāns were thrilled at his music and at the same time felt humbled. They thought that they were pigmies before the musical giant of Tiruvaiyār. Next morning they went to Tyāgarāja and prostrated before him. They regretted that they had not properly understood his greatness and begged of his pardon. With his usual magnanimity, Tyāgarāja forgave them and began to teach his songs to them. Sojiri Sītārāmayya learnt under Tyāgarāja for

many years. He also accompanied him during his trip to Kāñchipuram and Tirupati. Pallavi Duraisāmi Ayyar, the precocious musician that he was, died young at the age of 33, after achieving some laurels in music.

### NOTES ON SOME OF HIS DISCIPLES AND MEMBERS OF HIS SISHYA PARAMPARA

#### *Viṇa Kuppayyar.*

The most distinguished of Tyāgarāja's disciples was born in Tiruvottiyūr, a sacred place six miles to the north of Madras. He was also called Pāṭa Kuppayyar, Tiruvottiyūr Kuppayyar and Nārāyaṇagaula Kuppayyar, on account of his extraordinary originality in handling this rāga. He was a Tamil Brahmin of the Vaḍama sect and was a Sāma vēdi. He came of the Bhāradvāja Gōtra. His father was Sāmbamūrti S'āstri, a great musician and vaiṇika. Of him it was said: *Sāmbaḍu vāyiñchavalē, Sāmbaḍu vinavalē*, i.e. Sāmbaḍu (Sāmbamūrti S'āstri) should play (the Viṇa) and Sāmbaḍu (God S'iva) should listen to that music. It was said that musicians who listened to Viṇa Kuppayyar's performances profited greatly by them—such an original and creative artist was he. He was also a violinist and earned the title of "*Gāna chakravarti*" for his proficiency in the different systems of music. He has composed many varṇas, kritis and tillānas. He had a large number of disciples, prominent amongst whom may be mentioned Kottavāsal Veṅkaṭarāmayyar (the author of many varṇas), Sitārāmayya (a pallavi vidvān) and Fiddle Ponnusvāmi (the author of many varṇas). Viṇa Kuppayyar had three sons:— Kṛṣṇasvāmi, Rāmasvāmi and Tyāgayyar all of whom became great musicians. But the last named became a great composer as well. This Tyāgayyar has published



his own compositions in the book "*Saṅkīrtana ratnāvalī*". He has rendered signal service to the music world by publishing his father's kritis and varṇas in his other work, "*Pallavi svara kalpa valli*".

Viṇa Kuppayyar was a great bhakta and carried on the worship of his family Deity "*Rādhā Rukmiṇī samēda Śrī Vēṇugōpālasvāmi*" with great devotion and fervour. It was because of his devotion to his family deity that he signed his pieces as "*Gōpāla dāsa*". He served under the great Tyāgarāja for a long period and learnt the art of musical composition from him in a manner in which it was not the privilege of any other of his (Tyāgarāja's) disciples.

As stated on p. 96, at the invitation of Viṇa Kuppayyar, the great composer of Tiruvaṛiyār, visited Tiruvottiyūr. There in praise of Tripurasundari Ambāl he composed the five kritis:—*Kanna talli*, *Sundari ninnu varṇimpa*, *Sundari nannindarilō*, *Dārini telusukonṭi*, *Sundari nī divya rūpamuna*. Both of them next visited Kōvūr, halting at Madras on the way. Kuppayyar was the samasthāna vidvān of Kōvūr at that time and enjoyed the patronage of Sundara Mudaliyār.

During the latter part of his life, Viṇa Kuppayyar came and settled down in Madras. His house in Rāmasvāmi Street, Muthiālpēṭ, became a musical centre and many musicians and composers derived inspiration by coming into contact with him.

Viṇa Kuppayyar lived for 62 years. He was mainly responsible for making Madras a seat of musical culture. Madras has every reason to be proud of him.

Viṇa Kuppayyar had two wives ; the first wife died issueless. The second wife was called Sītamma. Viṇa Kuppayyar begot his three sons by his second wife.

Kuppayyar originally lived in Kōvūr (கோவூர்) and from there went to Tiruvottiyūr (திருவொத்தியூர்) and afterwards came and settled down in Madras.

Kuppayyar's eldest son passed away early in his life leaving a widow, 16 years old.

Of Viṇa Kuppayyar's sons, Rāmasvāmi and Tyāgayyar had no issues. Kuppayyar had a daughter by name Sundaram. The other son of Viṇa Kuppayyar (Kṛṣṇasvāmi) left a son nine months old at the time of his death. This child was named Kuppusvāmi. This Kuppusvāmi passed away in his 41st year in May 1908, leaving a daughter and this daughter is the wife of Mr. Rāmaswāmi Ayyar (ராமஸ்வாமி) now living in that house.

Tiruvottiyūr Tyāgayyar was born in the year 1845. He lived for seventy-two years and passed away in 1917. This Tyāgayyar was born to Viṇa Kuppayyar after the great Tyāgarāja came to Viṇa Kuppayyar's house in 1839 or so and was hence given the name of the great composer.

*Mānambuchāvaḍi Veṅkaṭasubbayyar.*

Another of Tyāgarāja's illustrious disciples was Mānambuchāvaḍi Veṅkaṭasubbayyar. He was a Murigināḍu Telugu Brahmin and was a relative of the Great Composer. He was an expert violinist. Prominent musicians like Mahā Vaidyanātha Ayyar, Paṭṇam Subrahmaṇya Ayyar, Sarabha S'āstrigaḷ, Lāvaṇi Veṅkaṭa Rao, Fiddle

Veṅkōba Rao, Pañchāpakēś'ayya (grand-son of Tyāgarāja) and S'ivarāmayyar studied under him. He has composed many kritis with the signature "Veṅkaṭēs'a". Some of the kritis ascribed to Paṇṇam Subrahmaṇya Ayyar are in reality those of Mānambuchāvaḍi Veṅkaṭasubbayyar's. The dubious authorship arose from the fact that both of them signed their pieces with the same signature "Veṅkaṭēs'a". In the kriti, "*Svāmiki sariyēvarana vachchu*" in Dēva-gāndhāri rāga, he pays his homage to his guru. The Kritis, *Mariyāda gādu* (Sarasvati rāga) and *Narahari hariyani* and the rāgamālikas: *Sivabhūpatē* and *Karuṇiñchumu* as also the two Malayamāruta rāga kritis: *Dhanyudevvaḍō* and *Janmamenduku* are his.

Mānambuchāvaḍi Veṅkaṭasubbayyar has composed kritis in two rare rāgas :--

1. *Āvarakuta* in Kutūhala rāga - Ādi tāla.

This rāga is a janya of the 29th mēla and takes the following ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa :

*s r m n d p n ś — ś n d p m g r s ;*

2. *Parabrahmam* in Pravāḷajōti rāga - Ādi tāla.

This is a janya of the 28th mēla and takes the following ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa :

*s r m p d n ś — ś n d n p m g s .*

*Pallavi Sēṣayyar (1846—1908).*

Amongst the composers who have enriched the music of the post-Tyāgarāja period, Pallavi Sēṣayyar occupies a prominent place. He belongs to Tyāgarāja's śiṣya param-

para. His father Neikkārappaṭṭi Subbayyar was a direct disciple of Tyāgarāja. Neikkārappaṭṭi is a village in the Salem District. Pallavi Sēṣayyar was a Telugu Brahmin and belonged to the Murigināḍu sect. To this sect belongs the great composer Tyāgarāja. Pallavi Sēṣayyar was a lakṣaṇa-lakṣya vidvān and a versatile composer. He has composed Kritis, Pada varṇas and Tillānas. His Kritis are brimful of rāga bhāva. His tillānas in Kānaḍa, Kapi, Vasanta and Dhanyāsi rāgas are splendid compositions. All his compositions are in Telugu.

Pallavi Sēṣayyar became proficient in music early in his life. He learnt Tyāgarāja's compositions from his own father. He specialized in Pallavi singing. He was able to handle even intricate pallavis with perfect ease. He was endowed with an extraordinary creative faculty. He was able to sing even minor rāgas for hours together. Once in the music festival conducted by Tiruvottiyūr Tyāgayyar in Madras, he sang the Dhanyāsi rāga and Pallavi for 8 hours. On another occasion he sang the Gaṇḍipantu rāga for 3 hours. At one concert, he sang the rāga, Dvijāvanti elaborately. The audience on all these occasions consisted of Saṅgita vidvāns. These are glorious records and these achievements have passed into musical history. He had also the capacity to sing Kalpana jatis. After singing kalpana svaras to the chosen theme, he used to delight his audiences by singing jatis extempore.

Pallavi Sēṣayyar was a devotee of Śrī Rāma. His compositions breathe the fragrance of bhakti. In his compositions we see a natural flow of music. Easy diction and sweet sounding words are a feature of his sāhityas. The saṅgatis in his Kritis succeed one another naturally. He is the first composer to compose a Kṛiti in Mallikāvasanta rāga :

*s g m p n ś — ś n d p m g r s .*

(Janya of Māyāmālāvagaṇa).

His compositions in Bhairavi, Pūrṇaṣaḍjam, Gaurimanōhari, Kēdāragaula, Sāma, Khamās, Kēdāram, Garuḍadhvani, Suddha sāvēri, Hindusthān Behāg, Subhapantuvarālī and Ṣaṇmukhapriya rāgas are as suggestive as they are interesting.

Pallavi Sēṣayyar is a svanāma mudrakāra. He was honoured in the Mysore Samasthānam. One of his prominent disciples was Maṇattaṭṭai Duraisvāmi Ayyar. Pallavi Sēṣayyar has done yeoman service by rendering his compositions in notation. He has also left a Manuscript containing the ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa of more than a thousand ragas. This Manuscript also contains brief notes on some other rāgas.

The circumstances attending the composition of his Tillāna in Dhanyāsi rāga are interesting. Once he went to Mysore desiring to sing in the Royal presence. He could not easily get an opportunity to do so. One Friday evening, he went up the Chāmuṇḍi Hill and stood in front of the big Bull on the way. In those days, there was no Motor road to go up the Hill and the Mahārājah invariably went along the pedestrian route and ascended the Hill. The Mahārāja as usual went up the hill that afternoon. At the spot in front of the Bull, he saw a scholarly person standing. From his appearance, he easily guessed that he must be either a poet or a saṅgīta vidvān. The Māharājah asked him who he was and what made him come and stand there all alone. Pallavi Sēṣayyar replied that he was a saṅgīta vidvān and had come all the way to Mysore to sing in the Royal presence and that his attempts to gain an opportunity to sing before His Highness so far were not successful. Forthwith the Mahārājah invited him to come to the Palace

the next day afternoon and issued orders to that effect to the Darbār Bakshi. Pallavi Sēṣayyar composed that night this Tillāna in Dhanyāsi rāga and the sāhitya at the commencement of the charaṇa,

“*Bhūmivelayu Sōmakulavara ! Syāma bhūpa ! Sēṣuni  
manavini vini,*

*Kāmitārthamu losagi kāvumika  
Kalyāṇa guṇa dhīra udhāra*”

is self-explanatory. The Mahārājah listened to the Dhanyāsi Tillāna brought as a gift to him and appreciated the creative talents of the Vidyān. He heard his concert subsequently and bestowed upon him special honours.

The Kāpi rāga that Pallavi Sēṣayyar has pictured to us in the Tillāna, *Udarana dhīm* is the upāṅga type of Kāpi rāga taking the ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa s r m p n ś — ś n d n p m G r s . G m p occurs herein as a viśēṣa prayōga.

It does not take the foreign notes, antara gāndhāra, s'uddha dhaivata and kākali niṣāda. Thus in the lakṣya of Karnāṭic music, we have three varieties of Kāpi rāga, firstly the pure Karnāṭaka kāpi immortalized by Kṣēṭrayya in his Padas, by Tyāgarāja in *Chūtamuraṛē* (*Nowkā Charitram*) and other songs and by Syāma S'āstri in *Akhilāṇḍēsvari*. Secondly the upāṅga type of Kāpi which we see in Pallavi Sēṣayyar's Tillāna and in the Kriti, *Manamōhana Syāmaḷa Rāma*. Thirdly there is the bhāṣāṅga type of Kāpi made familiar to us in jāvaḷis like *Vaddani nē*. The bhāṣāṅga type of Kāpi is also known by the names, Hindusthāni Kāpi, Dēs'ya Kāpi and Mis'ra Kāpi. Tyāgarāja did not compose in Hindusthani Kāpi but only in Karnāṭaka Kāpi.

## WALAJAPET DISCIPLES OF TYAGARAJA

Of the thirty prominent disciples of Tyāgarāja, the names of Wālājāpeṭ Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar and his gifted son Wālājāpeṭ Kṛṣṇasvāmi Bhāgavatār will be specially remembered by posterity. They have rendered signal service to the cause of Karnāṭic music by preserving and popularizing the sterling compositions of Tyāgarāja. Both the father and the son were deeply devoted to the sage of Tiruvaīyār and earned his grace. Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar was a great scholar in Sanskrit and Telugu. He was alive to the divinity within his Master. His reverential regard for Tyāgarāja was the consequence of the realization of the spiritual and musical greatness of his Master. He carefully noted down his Guru's compositions and operas. It is from the Wālājāpeṭ collection that the musical world came to know of the three operas of Tyāgarāja: *Prahlāda Bhakti Vijayam*, *Nowkā Charitram* and *Sītārāma Vijayam*. While the texts of the first two operas have been published, the text of *Sītārāma Vijayam* has yet to be traced. This opera pertains to the story of the Uttara Rāmāyaṇa. The music of the *Nowkā Charitram* has been published but not the music of *Prahlāda Bhakti Vijayam*. Whereas the other disciples of Tyāgarāja were more interested in learning his Kritis, the Wālājāpeṭ disciples took care to learn not only his Kritis but also his operas.

It is possible that the famous Manuscript copy of Pōtana's *Bhāgavatam*, now treasured in the Saurāṣṭra Sabha in Madura was written by Wālājāpeṭ Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar and presented to Tyāgarāja on the occasion of the latter's Ṣaṣṭiabdapūrṭi in the year 1827. The paper on which the *Bhāgavatam* is written

bears the water mark impression: 1823, 1824 and 1825. In the water mark impression, we see the spade Trade mark and also name of the firm: Wise and Co. The fact that this copy of *Bhāgavatam* was used by Tyāgarāja for his daily pāraṇam gives an added sanctity to the Manuscript.

Both Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar and Kṛṣṇasvāmi Bhāgavatar have left for us detailed biographies of the Great Composer. The saint's date of birth as also his horoscope have been kindly preserved for us by them.

Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar was born on the 10th Masi of the Sārvari year - Bahula Dasami, Mūla Nakṣatra, Rīṣabha Lagna - Sunday (18th February 1781). He belongs to the community of Saurāṣṭra Brāhmins. His father was Nannusvāmi Bhāgavatar. His grand-father was Kuppayyar. He studied Sanskrit and Telugu. Hearing of Tyāgarāja's greatness, he went every day to Tiruvaiyār, a distance of seven miles from his own place, Ayyampeṭ. He desired to study music under the Great Composer. For two years he was closely attending the lessons given by Tyāgarāja to his siṣyas. As already mentioned, on pp. 107 and 108, the long-desired opportunity came and he was admitted as a siṣya of Tyāgarāja.

In the earlier stages, Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar did not make the expected progress and it became a problem for the great composer. The latter went out of the way to pray Ś'ri Rāma that his pupil may be blessed with musical intelligence. The song *jñānamosagarādā* in Ṣaḍvidhamārgiṇi rāga was composed by him praying to God that He may be pleased to confer jñāna on his pupil. From the next day onwards, Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar made rapid



progress to the surprise of all. Tyāgarāja indeed was a rare type of an Āchārya (teacher).

Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar was a tall, stout, well-built man and was called 'Gaṇapati' by his co-disciples. For 26 years, he was associated with Tyāgarāja. In his 41st year, he married Muthulakṣmi Ammāl. For the sake of improving his business, he went to Wālājāpet.

The *Maṅgaḷāṣṭakam* (*S'rīmat Kākarla vamsābdi*) and the *Dhyāna ślōkas* composed by Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar in praise of Tyāgarāja are fitting tributes to the greatness of his Master. Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar has also composed some Kritis with the signature : Rāmachandrapura (the original name of Ayyampeṭ). He passed away on the Suddha saptami of Mārgaśīra month of Bhava year corresponding to Tuesday, 15th December 1874.

The pallavi and anupallavi of the song, *Tuḷasidaḷa-mulachē* (Māyāmālāvagaṇa rāga) may be taken as suggestive of the continued Tuḷasi kainkaryam of the Walajapet Bhāgavatars to Tyāgarāja (see pp. 107 and 108) and which enabled the latter to perform Tuḷasi archana to the Lord continuously.

The principal disciples of Wālājāpet Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar were :

- (1) Mysore Sadāśiva Rao,
- (2) Pallavi Ellayyar of Rāya Vellore,
- (3) Lōka Nārāyaṇayyar,
- (4) Kavi Veṅkaṭa Sūri and
- (5) Aruṇāchala Āchāri of Kāñchīpuram.

When the Bhajana Mandīram in Wālājāpet was completed and consecrated and Rāma viḡraha was installed there,

Mysore Sadās'iva Rao immortalized the occasion in a beautiful Kīrtana in Kāmbhōji rāga, beginning with the words "*Srī Sitā Lakṣmaṇasamēda Srī Kōdaṇḍarāmasvāmi nanu rakṣimpavēmi*".

Kṛṣṇasvāmi Bhāgavatar, the eldest son of Venkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar was born on Monday, 19th April 1824 - on the 9th Chitṛa of the Tāraṇa year (Saptami - Miduna Lagnam). In his 16th year, he went to Tiruvaiyār. He married Rukmiṇi Ammāl and the great composer blessed the couple. Kṛṣṇasvāmi Bhāgavatar practised the violin. Three sons, Rāmachandra Bhāgavatar, Rāmakṛṣṇa Bhāgavatar and Rāmasvāmi Bhāgavatar were born to him. The last named is the author of the book, *Tyāgabrahmōpaniṣad*.

Kṛṣṇasvāmi Bhāgavatar has composed some Kritis and Svarajatis. He assisted Mr. A. M. Chinnaśvāmi Mudaliyār in his publication '*Oriental Music in European notation*' by giving correct versions of the compositions of Tyāgarāja. A proof sheet of the above book containing the corrections carried out by Wālājāpeṭṭ Kṛṣṇasvāmi Bhāgavatar can be seen in the Wālājāpeṭṭ collection housed in the Saurāṣṭra Sabha Library, Madurai.

The principal disciples of Kṛṣṇasvāmi Bhāgavatar were, Fiddle Munusāmappa of Bangalore and Tiruvottiyūr S. A. Rāmasvāmi Ayyar. It was the custom for Kṛṣṇasvāmi Bhāgavatar to sing every forenoon ten kritis of Tyāgarāja and then take his meal. The ten Kritis sung on one day was not repeated the following day. Thus in a year he sang 3,600 Kritis and thus kept himself in lively touch with all the compositions of the Saint.

## CHAPTER XII

### HIS LAST DAYS - CONCLUSION AND MISCELLANEOUS

IN the year 1845, at the commencement of the Tamil year Vis'vāvasu (about April or May) his wife passed away. In the following year Parābhava, he himself was called to the sacred feet of the Lord. The circumstances attending his mortal end are as thrilling as they are fascinating. Perhaps in the life of no other composer, poet or bhakta in India or in any other part of the world has this miracle been witnessed.

### HIS LAST MOMENTS

On the Das'ami night preceding his siddhi, he had the famous dream, which he has immortalized in the Sahānā rāga kriti, "*Giripainela*". In the dream, he was promised that he will be called to the lotus feet of the Lord in 10 days time. On the following night, *i.e.* Puṣya S'uddha Ēkādasī night, towards the close of the bhajana, he addressed the congregation, thus: "On the coming Puṣya Bahula Pañchami day an adbhutam (surprising event) will take place. I request all of you to come on that day". This startling announcement set all the people thinking. On the Chaturthi day, *i.e.* the day prior to his demise, he requested Paramahansa Brahmānandēndra Svāmi to initiate him into sanyāsa āśrama. At first, the holy sage refused to condescend to his request saying that he (Tyāgarāja) was already a Jīvanmukta and there was no need for him to be

initiated into the sanyāsa ās'rama. But on Tyāgarāja repeating his request, he agreed to do so.

Tyāgarāja was initiated into the Ās'rama and was given the name Nādabrahmānanda. After this, Tyāgarāja said to those assembled "Tomorrow at 11 a.m. S'ri Rāmā has promised to take me back; please perform bhajana continuously from now onwards". This news soon spread and a large number of people had gathered the following morning to witness the closing moments of this Great Saint. There was a dismal gloom cast over Tiruvaiyār. Amongst the disciples that were present at that time were Umaiyaḷpuram Kṛṣṇa Bhāgavatar and Sundara Bhāgavatar, Tillasthānam Rāmā Ayyaṅgar, Ayyā Bhāgavatar and Wālājāpēṭ Kṛṣṇa-svāmi Bhāgavatar. Kāñchi Veṅkaṭādri Svāmi and Taluq Tahsildar Syāma Rao were also present at that time. On the morning of his siddhi, he composed and sang the two famous songs,

*Paramātmuḍu* - Vāgadhīs'vari rāga (Ādi tāḷa) and

*Paritāpamu* - Manōhari rāga (Rūpaka tāḷa)

Tyāgarāja sat in Yōga samādhi. . At the predicted moment, the congregation heard a mysterious nādam (sound) emanating from the Saint's head. Soon they saw a bright halo of light flying off from his head and vanishing slowly into the atmosphere high up and proceeding in a northerly direction. The mortal remains were then taken to the Kāvēri bank with all honours and to the accompaniment of music and interred in a place adjoining the samādhi of his Guru, Soṇṭi Veṅkaṭaramaṇayya. It was Tyāgarāja's wish that his remains should be interred next to that of his Guru.

## SAMADHI UTSAVAM

Tiruvaiyār is noted for the two grand festivals : (1) *Sapta sthāna utsavam* taking place in April and (2) *Tyāgarāja utsavam* taking place in January. At least 50,000 visitors and devotees throng to Tiruvaiyār each year to attend these festivals.

When Tyāgarāja attained *siddhi*, his body was carried with all the religious and musical honours to the ghat and orthodox ceremonies and Mahābhīṣēkam were performed with punctilious care.

Over the spot where his remains were interred, a *brindāvanam* was erected. For *Siva bhaktas* it is usual to instal a *liṅgam*. For *Haridāsas* it is customary to erect a *brindāvanam*. *Brindavanam* is a small hollow brick structure of four feet or more in height and in the interior of this, the sacred plant *tuḷasi* (*ocimum sanctum*) is planted and grown.

Prophetically enough, Tyāgarāja was saying to his disciples during his life-time, that his greatness will be known only sixty years after his demise. Ever since his *siddhi*, the Umaiyaḷpuram disciples and others used to go to the Samādhi every year during the Puṣya Bahula Pañchami day, do *pūjā* there and come home and perform the *ārādhana* proper. It is said that on those occasions, they became so absorbed and choked with the memory of the composer, that only tears rolled down their eyes and they could hardly sing.

Surprisingly enough, from the year 1907 onwards, the Samādhi utsavam entered on a new phase. Narasimha Bhāgavatar and Pañju Bhāgavatar of Tillasthānam along with

PLATE X



Pandal in front of Tyāgarāja's Samādhi — Puṣya Bahula Pāñchami Day Celebrations  
Top-ranking musicians, participating in the rendering of the Ghanarāga Pāñcha'atnam.



Rāmuḍu Bhāgavatar in the Shrine of Tyāgarāja's Samādhi. Behind him and the Image is the structure over the samādhi and to which Abhiṣēka is being performed. The floral top of this structure can be seen in the picture.

the great violinist, Gōvindasvāmi Pillai of Tiruchi began to celebrate the Utsavam on a grand scale.

The late Bangalore Nāgaratnammāl has earned for herself undying fame by spending all her savings in constructing the fine temple over the Samādhi (Bangalore Nāgaratnammāl studied music under Munusāmappa of Bangalore, who himself was a disciple of Wālājāpet Kṛṣṇasvāmi Bhāgavatar). The shrine over the Samādhi was constructed in the year 1925 and since then has been considerably improved and expanded.

The task of supervising the construction of the temple was left to the late Mr. S. A. Rāmasvāmi Ayyar of Tiruvottiyūr.

He told me an interesting incident which I wish to mention here.

Being the river bank, he had no idea as to how far he should dig around the Samādhi for the purpose of laying the foundation. He consulted the local experts and they were not able to enlighten him. He made bold to dig and when the servants reached a particular depth, the smell of *Sāmrāṇi* (incense) immediately emanated from the spot. He thought it was a warning that he should not dig further down. He started laying the foundations from that depth and later on constructed the shrine.

The late Sūlamaṅgalam Vaidyanātha Bhāgavatar along with a friend was performing Sandhyāvandanam one evening at the Kāvēri bank near the Samādhi. Suddenly, he heard the sound of "Rām Rām". They looked all round and there was no trace of any one. They immediately inferred that the sound emanated from the Samādhi itself.



The Tyāgabrahma Ārādhana Mahōtsava Sabha has since the year 1940 been celebrating the Annual festival of Tyāgarāja in Tiruvaiyar on a grand scale. The Festival of Tyāgarāja is the greatest National Music Festival of India. The Samādhi has become a veritable sacred spot, inspiring and purifying thousands of musicians, music-lovers and devotees who go there year after year.

### CONCLUSION

What is the language of a country worth, without a good literature in it and what is the musical system of a country worth without a good *lakṣya* in it? It is in this context that one should fully appraise and realize the value of the compositions of great Composers like Tyāgarāja. India's priceless contribution to world's musical thought is her rāga system. Rāgas are abstract concepts, but musical compositions and ālāpanas in them are concrete forms through which we are able to aurally feel and recognize the individualities of rāgas. The compositions of Tyāgarāja, delineating as they do, in close detail, the varied contours and other features of rāgas have rightly become classics. His compositions are of sterling worth and are for all times. They contain in them things of eternal value. His life is full of colourful incidents and it is an inspiration to read them. The whole gamut of emotion is traversed by him in his compositions.

India has produced from time to time, great men who have restated the truths of Indian philosophy and reminded the people of their glorious heritage. Tyāgarāja belongs to this noble group. Not only has he restated the truths in an attractive garb, but also stated them in the musical garb which will long be remembered.

Tyāgarāja has left behind him an imperishable tonal treasure-imperishable in the sense that even if all the books containing his compositions perish, still the compositions will continue to live in the hearts of thousands of singers and performers.

The Rāga bhāva saṅgatis adorning Kritis like, *Dārini telusukonṭi* (S'uddha sāvēri rāga), *Ō Raṅga sāyi* (Kāmbhoji rāga), *Mariyādagādura* (S'aṅkarābharāṇa rāga) and *Bhavanuta* (Mōhana rāga) were evidently added subsequently but the sāhitya bhāva saṅgatis in all his Kritis were composed at the first instance itself, *i.e.* sung along with the piece. Since these saṅgatis reflect the train of his thoughts, it is but natural they should have been sung in the first instance.

Tyāgarāja proclaimed the supreme power of the combined vehicle of music and sāhitya. According to the weightage given to music (dhātu), his compositions may be classified into :—

- (1) Wherein greater weightage is given to music: *Ex.* *Nājivādhārā* (Bilahari rāga) and *Koluvaiyunnāḍē* (Bhairavi rāga);
- (2) Wherein equal weightage is accorded to music and sāhitya: *Ex.* *Sitāpatē* (Khamas-rāga) and *Entani nē* (Mukhāri rāga) and
- (3) Wherein greater weightage is accorded to sāhitya: *Ex.* Divyanāma kīrtanas like, *S'rī Rāmā Jayarāmā* and Utsava sampradāya kīrtanas like, *Hechcharikagā rārā*.

## GHANARAGA PANCHARATNA

The bhāvas underlying the sāhityas of the Pañcharatna compositions suggest that they were composed during different times and during different psychological states of his mind :—

The Nāṭa rāga piece, *Jagadānandakāraka* is all praise and consists mainly of doxologies. It is suggestive of heroic praise and Nāṭa rāga suggestive of Vira rasa is very apt in this connection. The whole song along with the repetitions of the pallavi at the conclusion of each charaṇa consists of 108 names of the Lord. Tyāgarāja added the extra mudra charaṇas to bring up the total number of names to 108. An aṣṭōttara sata archana can be performed to S'ri Rāmā with the names found in this sāhitya and by adding the prefix *ōm* and the suffix *nama :* to each name, and the name being rendered in the fourth case thus :

Ōm Jagadānandakārakāya nama :

Ōm Jaya Jānakī Prāṇanāyakāya nama :

Ōm Gagānadhīpa satkulajāya nama .

Ōm Rāja rājāya nama : etc.

*Dudukugala* (Gaula rāga) is in a penitent mood. Like the Ārabhi and S'rīrāga Pañcharatnas, this also contains a concluding section which is sung only as sāhitya and not as svara sāhitya.

*Sādhinchenē* (Ārabhi rāga) is a comment on the deeds of the Lord.

*Endarōmahānubhāvulu* (S'rīrāga) is composed in all humility and herein, the composer pays his homage to various types of great men.

*Kana kana ruchirā* is couched in the tone of pure bhakti.

In the *Ārabhi Pañcharatna*, it is interesting to note that Tyāgarāja refers to Kṛṣṇa as *Saṅgita sāmpradāyakuḍu*.

It is principally composers that contribute to the growth and development of a country's music. The top-ranking performers can at best interpret the classical composers and give a stylish, polished and embellished rendering of their compositions. But composers create new forms or compose complicated pieces in known forms and compel the performers to strive along new channels and evolve newer techniques for satisfactorily rendering such pieces.

Tyāgarāja's compositions may be compared to a perennial fountain of oil, continuously feeding the lamp of Karnāṭic music and make it burn with undiminished lustre.

Chauka kāla kritis, generally speaking will not afford much scope for decorating the dhātu with phrases of tāna jāti patterns and the beautiful alaṅkāras of ancient music. Tyāgarāja wisely chose the madhyama kāla tempo which gave him full scope for coloured musical writing, without at the same time overloading the dhātu with too much of ornamental material.

The great intellectual and devotee that Tyāgarāja was, his compositions will survive by their inherent beauty and charm. The greatest service that he has done is to bring the joy of music to the common man. He has composed even pieces which the man in the street can sing and delight himself. When the Tamil Poet Subrahmanya Bhārati referred to *Sundara Teluṅgu* (beautiful Telugu) in

one of his poems, he must have had in his mind, the splendid compositions of Tyāgarāja. He saw the potentialities of the *ravai jāti s'ārira* and accordingly composed pieces teeming with *madhyama kāla saṅgatis* and *trikāla saṅgatis*.

Tyāgarāja's was an age of intense specialization in *manōdharma saṅgita*. Some *vidvāns* specialized in particular *rāgas* while others specialized in the *ghanam*, *nayam* and *dēśyam* styles of singing. When Tyāgarāja blazed forth hundreds of his *kritis* of endless beauty and charm, the *vidvāns* and *rasikas* of his time had not even the time to digest and assimilate their artistic worth. Further he composed in many new *rāgas*, whose melodic worth and possibilities had not even been dreamt of before. The fact that when Mahā Vaidyanātha Ayyar as a boy of 12, expounded the *rāga Chakravāka* before an assembly of *vidvāns* in the Kallidaikurichchi branch of Tiruvāḍuturai Maṭh in Tirunelveli District in 1856, leading *vidvāns* like Periya Vaidyanātha Ayyar present there, were not even able to identify the *rāga* is a proof that even though Tyāgarāja had already composed two *kritis* (*Sugunamulē* and *Eṭṭulabrōṭuvō teliya*) in this *rāga*, the knowledge of this *rāga* was confined only to Tyāgarāja's disciples and had not widely spread.

During the last years of his life, Tyāgarāja expressed a desire to listen to all his compositions, composed by him during different periods of his life and taught to various disciples who were with him during those periods. A list of all the past disciples was immediately prepared by his then *śiṣyaś* and the request of the composer, communicated to all of them. (It may be mentioned in this connection

that Tyāgarāja himself did not maintain a catalogue of the compositions composed by him). Such of those disciples as were living, honoured their master's wish by themselves coming and singing his compositions before him. In the case of the deceased disciples, the disciples of these deceased *śiṣyas* deemed it their sacred duty to respect the wish of the great composer. They came to Tiruvaiyār and sang before him, his compositions learnt by them from their masters. Disciples like Walajapet Kṛṣṇasvāmi Bhāgavataṛ, Tillasthānam Rāma Ayyaṅgār and Umaiyaḷpuram Kṛṣṇa Bhāgavataṛ and Sundara Bhāgavataṛ who were *śiṣyas* of Tyāgarāja during his last years, had thus this rare opportunity of listening to all the compositions of the composer composed by him during the early, middle and later periods. They not only learnt these compositions, but also preserved them in notation. This accounts for the extensive repertoire of these particular disciples and the emergence of the *Wālājāpet pāṭam*, *Tillasthānam pāṭam* and *Umaiyaḷpuram pāṭam*. It is estimated that Tyāgarāja in all had 120 pairs of disciples and since each pair was taught 200 compositions, the number of compositions composed by him is worked out as 24,000.

During his old age, whenever visitors came and expressed a desire to listen to his compositions, Tyāgarāja asked Tillasthānam Rāma Ayyaṅgār to sing for him. This is a testimony to the fact that Rāma Ayyaṅgār had a fine responsive voice and rendered the compositions of the Saint to the latter's full satisfaction.

#### RHETORICAL BEAUTIES

The pallavi of the kriti *Manasā manasā martyamēmi* (Vardhani rāga) contains the beauty, yamakam. Yamakam

is a repetition of a word, syllable or foot in a stanza or section, but with different meanings. The change of meaning is sometimes effected by changes in the division of words. This beauty is called மடங்கு in Tamil.

The kriti *Graha bala mēmi* (Revagupti rāga) is full of this beauty. The difference in meaning for the same recurring phrase at each stage is the very essence of Yamakan.

In *Graha bala mēmi*, the phrase 'graha' occurs at the commencement of every āvarta with varied meanings.

The words anugraha, vigraha, āgraha, nigraha and agrēsarula are so cleverly dispersed in the āvartas, that we hear the phrase 'graha' at symmetrical points in the āvartas right through and this gives a peculiar lilt and charm to the song.

In the charaṇa of the kriti, *Dēva Rāma Rāma* (Saurāṣṭra rāga) we find the word 'S'aṅkara' occurring at symmetrical points of the āvartas.

Kritis like *Nidhi chāla sukhama* (Kalyāṇi rāga) and *Tanayuni brōva* (Bhairavi rāga) furnish examples of songs whose sāhityas are *rhetorical interrogations* i.e. questions wherein the answers are self-apparent.

#### VINTA RAGALU (NOVEL RAGAS)

Tyāgarāja has composed good kritis in new rāgas which may strike one as novel. Rāgas like Kuntalavarāli, Sāramati, Supōṣini and Navarasakannaḍa may be cited as examples. Tyāgarāja was sure of his position when he

was composing in these rāgas. He was convinced of their melodic beauty and worth. In the kritis *Muchchata Brahmādulaku* (Madhyamāvatī rāga) and *Chitra ratna maya* (Kharaharapriya rāga) he specifically refers to the fascinating effect of ālāpanas in these novel rāgas.

Tyāgarāja in many songs, included a word or two at the end of the anupallavi or charaṇa or both and which have a direct bearing or connection with the first word of the pallavi. Thus in the kriti *Pakkala nilubaḍi* (Kharaharapriya rāga) the sense of the last phrase, *Rāmunikiru* continues with the sense of the word 'Pakkala'.

#### TYAGARAJA FESTIVAL

We go to a Tyāgarāja festival, to listen more to the composer than to the musician. Thus elaborate ālāpanas of rāgas and singing niravals and kalpana svaras to pieces will be out of place in such a festival. His compositions on such occasions should be rendered fully and with real feeling. All the charaṇas of a song should be sung. One more point should be remembered. In each piece of his, in a particular rāga, he has dealt with a particular aspect of the rāga. The other aspects of the rāga are dealt with in his other pieces in the rāga. By singing niravals and kalpana svaras to a theme in one piece, the singer cannot but digress on the other aspects of the rāga, touched upon by the composer in his other pieces. This will amount to supplementing what the composer had not intended.

Tyāgarāja's compositions are a source of divine joy, inspiration and comfort. His compositions have invested Karnāṭic music with a perpetual vitality. There is the combination of tradition and individual expression in his



songs. Every variety of human experience is presented in his songs.

Pioneer artists like Tyāgarāja set up musical standards for all times. The flood of musical ideas that emanated from the surging wells of his musical thoughts have endowed his compositions with a special charm. Tyāgarāja has become one of the world's immortals. His compositions have made Telugu a most lovable, fascinating and attractive language.

### OUR DUTY

The thought that we are the citizens of a country which has produced a Tyāgarāja is sufficient to instil in us a certain amount of legitimate pride. Our National Poet, Subrahmanya Bhārati has included rightly in the items of India's heritage, Tyāgarāja kirtanas (see his collection of essays — Kaṭṭuraigal — *Āriya sampattu*). But we must not stop with glorifying ourselves as the legatees of the musical heritage left by Tyāgarāja. We must take steps to see that opportunities are provided for teaching his compositions and performing them on an all-India basis.

The publication of a *Variorum edition* of Tyāgarāja, giving elaborate notes and comments on each composition, the rare phrases used therein, readings and subsequent changes in rendering if any, along with an appreciatory note should forthwith be undertaken. It is only then that we can hope to hand on the precious heritage to the coming generation untarnished.

The following methods may also be adopted for preserving his compositions for Posterity :—

- (1) Engraving them on copper-plates with svāra and sāhitya. In the copper-plates containing the songs of the Tāllapakam composers of Tirupati, only the sāhitya is engraved and not the notation for the songs; and
- (2) Recording the songs on the gramophone or tape with the help of saṅgita vidvāns with responsive and ringing voices and whose pāṭāntarams are accredited to be authentic.

### MISCELLANEOUS

In this section are given odd bits of information and other details concerning Tyāgarāja and his compositions and which have not found a place in the preceding chapters.

#### H. H. VIŚAKAM TIRUNAL'S TRIBUTE

H. H. Viśākam Tirunāl (1880 - 1885), Mahārāja of Travancore visited Tanjore during the course of one of his tours. He was presented with an address by the people of Tanjore. In his reply, His Highness mentioned "I rejoice that I stand to-day on the soil that has produced Appayya Dīkṣitar and Tyāgarāja."

#### RAMA MANTRA UPADESAM

Tyāgarāja, also had upadēśam of Rāma mantra from Kōḍaṇḍarāmasvāmi of the Marudanallūr Maṭh (near Kumbakonam).

#### GURUKULA

Tyāgarāja himself conducted a Gurukula and showed how to run such an Institution to the maximum benefit of the disciples.

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*Vijayasrī rāga.*

Tyāgarāja took interest in popularizing the piece *Vara Nārada*, because through its rāga, Vijayasrī, he was able to remind musicians of some aspects of the Varāli rāga. The Varāli rāga, it may be mentioned was not directly taught to disciples on account of the odium attached to it.

The tradition is, that if Varāli rāga or a piece in it is directly taught, some misunderstanding or estrangement results between the teacher and the taught. This accounts for the loss of many tunes and pieces in Varāli rāga. Those that have survived are due to the enterprise of the vidvāns who heard them as their masters sang and indirectly learnt them and rendered them in notation.

*Nāda tanumanisam.*

This solitary kriti in Chittarañjanī rāga is of great significance. The frequencies of the notes figuring in this rāga are the exact frequencies of the notes of the *Sāma gāna* scale. Appropriately enough Tyāgarāja refers to the seven notes figuring in the rāga of the song as *vara sapta svara*

s	r	g	m	p	d	n
1	$10/9$	$32/27$	$4/3$	$3/2$	$5/3$	$16/9$

If one will pause for a while and reflect on the notes figuring in the opening bars of the charaṇa '*Sadyojātādi*', he will find that the notes for that particular part resemble the udātta, anudātta and svarita svaras of Vēdic chant :—

,	p	P	M	P	d
.	Sad	yō	jā	tā	di,

The *dha* stands for udātta, *ma* for anudātta and *pa* for svarita.

*Sarasīruhānana* (Mukhāri rāga).

When Tyāgarāja became famous as a composer and when his songs were eagerly sought after by many musicians including dancing girls who were on the establishments of temples and who had to sing songs pertaining to the spheres of art music and sacred music on the occasion of temple rituals, Jalpēs'an (his elder brother) requested Tyāgarāja to teach some of his songs to the dancing girls of Tiruvaiyār. The high moralist that he was, Tyāgarāja refused to do so and this was one of the causes that further embittered the feelings between the two brothers and which culminated in the Rāma vigraha being thrown into the Kāvēri river. The song *Sarasīruhānana* (Mukhāri rāga) is a caustic and indirect reply to his brother's request.

#### NAMES FOR THE THREE SONS OF RAMABRAHMAM

The first son was named Jalpēs'an, because he was born in Tiruvaiyār. It is usual to name the first son born in a family after the name of the presiding Deity of the place. Pañcha-nadī's'a, Pañchāpakēs'a and Praṇatārtihara are the other names of the Deity of the temple in Tiruvaiyār.

The second son was named Rāmanāthan, because Ramabrahmam was a devotee of S'ri Rāma and performed Pūja to the Rāma vigraha in his house.

The third son was named Tyāgarāja because he was born in Tiruvārūr, containing the great shrine of Tyāgarāja.

## P A R T I T I O N

The partition between the two brothers was effected by the Magistrate of Tiruvaīyār on the day when Tyāgarāja and his wife were asked to quit the house by the cruel brother and asked to stand in the street. The partition was only an oral agreement and no deeds were executed. It was that very night that S'ri Rāma, Sīta and Āñjanēya visited Tyāgarāja and which led to the composition of the kriti, *Bhavanuta* (see p. 87). Rāma's visit was an assurance to him that God was on his side and that he (Tyāgarāja) can go along with his work undaunted. The song *Kalugunā pada* was composed in praise of Āñjanēya who dutifully prepared the meal that night and otherwise rendered all help. It was at 4-30 a.m. that the Divine visitors came out of Tyāgarāja's house and vanished.

## T R A D I T I O N

There is a tradition in the family of Tyāgarāja and his close relatives, that if a male child born in their families is given the name of the great composer, it does not survive or the child does not prosper later on. The example of Tyāgarāja's grand-son (who was named after his grand-father) is cited as an example. This grand-son who became a very good singer died young, without leaving any issue.

When the late Rāmuḍu Bhāgavatar (great grand-son of Tyāgarāja's elder brother) was planning to give the name Tyāgarāja to his son, he was warned by his senior relatives not to do so. This boy lived for about 12 years and got drowned in the Kāvēri river at the very spot where the Rāma vighara was thrown by Jalpēs'an (also see p. 89, last para).

Rāmuḍu Bhāgavatar also lost his other fair son in 1952. With the demise of Rāmuḍu Bhāgavatar himself in February

1954, the direct line of Tyāgarāja as also that of his elder brother have become extinct.

### HIS INTEREST IN YOUTHS

Whenever Tyāgarāja was invited to be present at the Upanayanam ceremony of a boy, he invariably responded to the invitation. He went and blessed the boy. The blessing from the great composer had its magnetic reaction on the boy. He naturally devoted his attention to studies, led the life of an ideal Brahmacharya and became a worthy member of the Society later on.

### HIS MOTHER

When Rāmabrahmam was seriously ill, his wife expressed a desire to commit *Sati*. She was too devoted towards him to bear the earthly separation. But Rāmabrahmam strongly advised her not to do so and said that she must live to see the glory of her son, Tyāgarāja. She respected her husband's wish and lived to see that the prophetic words that fell from his mouth became true. Rāmabrahmam passed away in the year 1787, when Tyāgarāja was 20 years of age.

The *Nidhi chāla sukhamā* episode took place in 1802 i.e. when Tyāgarāja was 35 years old. When he gave this firm reply to Sarabhōji's emissaries, his elder brother complained to his mother about this haughty reply. But the mother inwardly felt happy at the dignified stand taken by Tyāgarāja and later congratulated him.

The family partition took place only after the mother passed away.

## PADINAINDU MANTAPAM

Rāmabrahmam originally lived in Tīruvārūr. He started on a pilgrimage to Benares along with his family. When he came to Tiruvaīyār, he was told in a dream that he can stay in Tiruvaīyār itself which is holier than Benares by  $\frac{1}{16}$ th (காசிக்கு வீசம் அதிகம் திருவையாறு). Simultaneously Tulajāji II (1765 - 1787) had a dream that he may patronize Rāmabrahmam. The Mahārājah of Tanjore met Rāmabrahmam, requested him to stay in Tanjore and gave sarva mānyam (free-hold) land in Pasupatikōvil and a house in Tiruvaīyār.

Tulajāji once went on a pilgrimage to Rāmēsvaram. There the Prime Minister suggested that the King may make a bhūdānam i.e. gift of land to 16 Brāhmins for atonement of certain sins. "Where are the 16 Brāhmins?" asked the King (Rāmabrahmam was there). The Prime Minister said "Let the entire gift be given to Rāmabrahmasvāmi as dattam (தத்தம்). He will afterwards give them to 15 Brāhmins after retaining his share. Accordingly Rāmābrahmam was offered the gift. On this land 15 houses were built later on and these came to be known as the Padinaindu maṇṭapam. These houses can even now be seen at the entrance to Tiruvaīyār on the left side and on the northern bank of the river. One of the 15 recipients was the grand-father of the late T. S. Sabhēs'ayyar, first Principal of the Rājah Aṇṇāmalai Music College, Chidambaram. Rāmabrahmam himself lived for sometime along with his family in the house that fell to his share. Later he came to the house in Tirumañjana vidhi. Tyāgarāja spent a part of his early life in the house in the Padinaindu maṇṭapam row of houses.

### PLANCHETTE MESSAGES

A prominent official and a descendant of *Soṇṭi Veṅkaṭa-ramaṇayya* once told me that he contacted the Great Composer *Tyāgarāja* through the Planchette. When requested for a message, the Great Composer it appears said

“ I attained God through music.”

*Soṇṭi Veṅkaṭa-ramaṇayya* was a *Vaidiki Velanadu*, and belonged to the *Gautama Gōtra* and *Āpastamba Sūtra*.

Another scholar and official who was working with the Planchette told me that whereas he was able to contact great souls like *Svāmi Vivēkānanda* and others, it was impossible for him to contact *Tyāgarāja*. The answer came from some other source to him, that *Tyāgarāja* had already attained the highest bliss and had merged with the Oversoul. It was difficult to contact him.

(*Note:—Tyāgarāja's Guru bhakti* is wellknown and it is quite possible that he responded to the respectful request of a descendant of his Guru from his Heavenly abode.)

### NANU PALIMPA PICTURE

This picture was studded with gems and pearls as proved by the *Charaṇa* of the song. These are now missing. These gems and pearls it is said were removed by *Paṭṭābhi-rāmayya*, the grand father of *Rāmuḍu Bhāgavatar*, when perhaps some of them began to drop off (Also see p. 88).

Once or twice, musicians, took this picture from *Rāmuḍu Bhāgavatar's* house and kept it in their own house for *pūja*.



But the person who took the picture was invariably warned and terrorised in dream. One musician it is said saw the fiery forms of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with their bows fully drawn and in action. The picture was returned back to Rāmuḍu Bhāgavatar. This picture has ever since remained in his house in Tirumañjana vidhi.

Incidentally it may be pointed out that there is a certain appropriateness in the use of the word 'Prāṇanātha' in the pallavi of this song. The picture came to him on the morning of the day of his daughter's marriage. The idea that his daughter was going to be united in wedlock to her Prāṇanātha (husband) was looming large in his mind and he naturally used the word 'Prāṇanātha' (Lord) in the pallavi of the song. Prāṇanātha in the song refers to S'ri Rāma, the Lord of Tyāgarāja.

#### PRAKSHIPTA SAHITYAS

Once a composer becomes famous, it is a natural tendency for the lesser talented ones to compose songs introducing the 'mudra' of the Great Composer and pass such compositions as genuine ones. But any scholar can at once recognize such spurious compositions. Poor music, insipid sāhitya, faulty prosody and far-fetched ideas straightaway reveal the dubious authorship. Sometimes forged compositions with good tunes gain currency. When the real composer comes forward at a later stage to assert that those are his own compositions and that he introduced the signature of Tyāgarāja only to make people learn them, people have dubbed him as a liar and maintained that Tyāgarāja himself must have been the author of those pieces.

The following are some of the prakṣipta sāhityas (spurious kritis) bearing the signature of Tyāgarāja. The real authors are also mentioned against them :—

1. *Vinatā suta vāhanuḍai* - Harikāmbhōji rāga
2. *Nīdu charaṇamulē* - Simhēndramadhyama rāga.
3. *Natajana paripāla* - Simhēndramadhyama rāga

These three are by K. V. Srinivāsa Ayyaṅgār

4. *Parāmukhamēlara* - Surāṭi rāga
5. *Abhimānamennaḍu* - Vivardhani rāga

These two are by Mannārguḍi Rājagōpala Ayyar

6. *Dinamē sudinamu* - Latāṅgi rāga

By Girīs'a Ayyar

7. *Veḍalenu Kōdaṇḍapāṇi* - Tōḍi rāga

This song was composed by Tanjore Kṛṣṇa Bhāgavatar as a nirūpaṇam (story song) for the episode relating to Khara vadam in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Another insignificant person took up this sāhitya, made a few alterations here and there and introduced cleverly the Tyāgarāja mudra and began to sing it and pass it off as a composition of Tyāgarāja. When Kṛṣṇa Bhāgavatar came to know of it, he resented the action of that musician.

The tune of *Veḍalenu Kōdaṇḍapāṇi* is substantially the same as Tyāgarāja's *Brindāvana lōla*.

The songs, *Mivalla guṇadōṣa* and *Inta saukhyamani* are now sung in Hindusthāni Kāpi rāga by some. These are

spurious tunes. Tyāgarāja composed them only in Kar-nāṭaka Kāpi rāga.

It may also be pointed out that the kriti, *jñānamosaga-rādā* was composed by Tyāgarāja only in Ṣaḍvidhamārgiṇi rāga and not in Pūrvakalyāṇi rāga as sung now.

The tunes of the following songs as heard at present are wholly or partly spurious:—

<i>Sundari nī divya rūpamunu</i>	- Kalyāṇi rāga,
<i>Vāsudēvāyani</i>	- Kalyāṇi rāga, and
<i>Saṅgita jñānamu</i>	- Dhanyasi rāga.

### HIS LANGUAGE

Tyāgarāja used *Siṣṭa vyavahārika bhāṣā*, i.e. the language spoken by civilized people. He neither used slang language nor the pedantic language. *Pakkala nilubaḍi golichē muchchata* sounds perfectly alright; *golichē* need not be changed into *golicheḍu*. Such a change jars on the ears and mars the musical effect. Likewise *Uṇḍēdi Rāmuḍokaḍu* and *Marāchevāḍanā* sound perfectly well.

Tyāgarāja avoided using words with different meanings. This has saved us from endless interpretations of his sāhityas. Songs resulting from experience are the best.

He used *versified prose* i.e. prose sāhityas wherein the yāti and prāsa occur naturally. He has also used prāsa yatis in profusion. The language used by him is such that one is able to understand the meaning even as the song is sung without the necessity of the words being recast into prose order. Tyāgarāja was passionately fond of Pōtanā's

*Bhāgavatam* and like him (Pōtana) has used a simple language. Even though his language is simple, great and grand ideas are contained in his sāhityas. His songs which are the product of genius and devotion can be studied as literature as well. The ideas contained in some of his songs can with profit be translated into other languages.

The *Misra samāsas* found in his sāhityas are to be justified from the point of view of poetic licence. Taking *Mujjagamulalō* in the kriti, *Enta bhāgyamō* (Sāraṅga rāga) for example, we see herein the combination of Telugu and Sanskrit. *Mummūrtulugumi* (Aṭhāṇa rāga) is another example. Peculiar usages found in some of his songs have to be justified as local or provincial usages. *Saṅgīta vyākaraṇam* may be invoked in justification of his wrong yatis. He uses the word *tanaku* in the sense of *nāku* in many songs. The word *Gaṅgā sāgaram* (Chakkani rāja) is a dignified Chōḷa dēśa prayōga for alcoholic drink.

### P E A R L S

A string of pearls or beautiful thoughts can be culled from Tyāgarāja's songs. A few examples are given below:—

1. The life spent in swimming in the milky ocean of your devotion is the life worthily spent; all else constitute a burden to the earth.

(*Ni bhakti bhāgya sudhā* - Jayamanōhari rāga)

2. Knowledge of the science of music  
Conduces to bliss Divine

(*Saṅgīta s'āstra jñānamu* - Mukhāri rāga)

3. Is there salvation for people who are devoid of devotion and who do not possess a knowledge of the science of music ?

(*Mōkṣamu galadā* - Sāramati rāga)

4. When there is the royal road (of Rāma bhakti) leading to Eternal Bliss, why seek ye the by-lanes ?

(*Chakkanirāja* - Kharaharapriya rāga)

5. Meditation (on Rāma) is the supremest purificatory bath

(*Dhyānamē varamaina* - Dhanyāsi rāga)

6. (The whole universe being Brahman), where shall I spot you out and embrace you ?

(*Endu kaugilintura* - Suddhadēśi rāga)

7. What does it matter whether a wealthy person who does not spend his money for virtuous causes at appropriate times, lives or dies ?

(*Samayamu telisi* - Asāvēri rāga)

8. Music devoid of devotion will not lead to salvation

(*Saṅgita jñānamu bhakti vīnā* - Dhanyāsi rāga)

9. However well one might have studied, without listening to the wise utterances of the Great, and without drinking in the nectar of the golden sayings of bhaktas, wisdom will not come to him.

(*Buddhi rādu* - Saṅkarābharāṇa rāga)

10. The dars'ana of the person who has been blessed with the supreme wealth of Rāma bhakti (devotion to Rama) is an indescribable bliss. It is impossible to describe that bliss. It should be experienced  
(*Rāma bhakti sāmrajyam* - Suddhabaṅgāla rāga)
11. For the great one, who has conquered his manas, where is the need for mantra and tantra?  
To him who knows that this (physical) body is not the same as his self, where is the need for penance?  
(*Manasu svādhīnamaina* - Saṅkarābharaṇa rāga)
12. Without peace (of mind) there is no bliss. Whether he is a man of wealth or a philosopher, whether he is blessed with wife, children and material wealth or whether he has performed japa and tapa, to all alike, without peace, there is no bliss  
(*Sāntamulēka* - Sāma rāga)

## R A M A B H A K T I

Tyāgarāja was a *siddhi puruṣa*. He extolled the value of devotion to Rāma in a number of his songs. His bhakti towards Rāma ripened with his age. Some of the contributory causes which led to his unshakable faith in Rāma are:—

1. His daily pūja to the family idol, S'rī Rāma Paṭṭābhi-  
ṣēka mahōtsava vighraha;
2. Accompanying his father, during the latter's exposition of the *Rāmāyaṇa*;
3. Recital of 96 crores of *Rāma nāma* — an achievement without a parallel in the religious history of India; and

4. His getting Rāma nāma upadēśa from his own father, and then from Rāmakṛṣṇa Yatīndra and also from the Pontiff of the Marudānallūr Maṭh.

Tyāgarāja had always the sacred string (ஸுத்திர கயிறு) in his hands and was performing Rāma japa whenever he was free.

During the last seven years of his life, it is said that he rarely slept. He merely recoiled on a wooden plank between the hours of 11 p.m. and 3 a.m. and even during that period his lips were found to be uttering the name of Rāma.

In front of the Rāma vigraha in his house, there were two ghee lamps burning day and night.

### CONSCIOUS OF HIS GREATNESS

Tyāgarāja is the most musically enlightened soul of our times. He was conscious of his greatness. In the song *Entarāni tana* (Harikambhōji rāga) after referring to Āñjanēya, Lakṣmaṇa, Vasiṣṭha and the Vānaras, he says "Has not Tyāgarāja sung of your great qualities?" This and the statement in the song *Ēlāvatāramettukoṇṭivō* (Mukhāri rāga), "Is it for protecting Tyāgarāja who has written the *Satarāgaratnamālikā*, that you took avatār in this world?" are not without significance. His self-confidence and consciousness of his greatness in the realm of music are revealed in the song *Rāmābhirāma manasu* (Dhanyāsi rāga). He says herein "Oh Lord please command me to sing, when you are in the company of matchless Sita". The song *Chintistunnāḍē* (Mukhāri rāga) furnishes another proof that he was conscious of his greatness (pp. 80 and 81).

## H I S   A N K I T A M

Scholars and biographers of the Great composer refer to him as:—

Tyāgarāja	Tyāgarāja svāmi
Tyāgabrahmam	Tyāgarāja brahmam
Tyāgayya	Tyāgarājayya
Tyāgayyar	Tyāgarājayyar
Tyāgarāya	Tyāgarāyasvāmi
Ayyarvāl and	Svāmigaḷ.

His disciples who were treated with *sama drshti* (i.e. accorded equal treatment) by their Master, invariably referred to him as *Ayyarvāl* and his compositions as *Ayyarvāl kritis*.

Tyāgarāja is a *svanāma mudrakāra*. He usually introduced his name in the song with a Sanskrit suffix. Occasionally we find him resorting to a Telugu suffix. The name with the suffix will mean, Rāma or the Deity in whose praise the composition is composed,

- (a) who is praised by Tyāgarāja ; or
- (b) who is worshipped by Tyāgarāja ; or
- (c) who dwells or resides in the heart of Tyāgarāja or in the house of Tyāgarāja ; or
- (d) who is a friend of Tyāgarāja ; or
- (e) who is the protector of Tyāgarāja ; or
- (f) who is the lustrous gem adorning the line of Tyāgarāja and so on.



The following are the forty forms in which his mudra occurs :—

- Tyāgarājanuta
- Tyāgarājavinuta
- Tyāgarāja sannuta
- Tyāgarāja vandya
- Tyāgarāja vandita
- Tyāgarājāpta
- Tyāgarājārchita
- Tyāgarāja mānasa sarōja
- Tyāgarāja hruddhāma
- Tyāgarāja hrudbhāntam
- Tyāgarāja varahrudaya nives'a
- Tyāgarāja hrudālaya
- Tyāgarāja hrudsadana
- Tyāgarāja hruchchāri
- Tyāgarāja hrudbhūṣaṇa
- Tyāgarājuni hrudaya sarōja vāsini
- Tyāgarāja hrudvārijamitra
- Tyāgarāja hrudabjasu bhriṅga
- Tyāgarāja hrudayākāra
- Tyāgarāja kula vibhūṣa
- Tyāgarāja kulapāvana
- Tyāgarāja varada
- Tyāgarāja pōṣakuḍu
- Tyāgarāja paripāla
- Tyāgarāja pālam
- Tyāgarāja rakṣaka
- Tyāgarāja chitta hituḍu
- Tyāgarāja pūjita
- Tyāgarāja sevitāya
- Tyāgarāja ketahāra

Tyāgarāja svānta sadana  
Tyāgarāja ripujaladasamīra  
Tyāgarāja gēyamā  
Tyāgarājuni mitru  
Tyāgarāja hrudsañchāram  
Tyāgarāja manōhari  
Tyāgarājēs'a  
Tyāgarāja jihvapai rājillu  
Tyāgarāja sakhuḍu and  
Tyāgarājādi dēvatulu.

In the last instance, the word Tyāgarāja is used in the sense of Paramas'iva.

(For examples of songs wherein these 40 varieties of mudras occur, see the author's South Indian Music, Book V, pp. 143 to 145).

## PHILOSOPHY

Tyāgarāja is the greatest reconciler of the warring tenets of Hindu religious philosophy. He emphasized the soundness and truth underlying the different systems. He presented profound truths in very simple language. He hated religious hypocracies. He rose from humanity to divinity. On the day of his samādhi, he realized the *Nirguṇa brahman* and became one with the Universal Self.

Tyāgarāja did not found a new system of philosophy. That was not his ambition. His ideal of service and uplift of humanity was always present in his mind. He expounded the eternal philosophic truths through his simple songs like *Anāthudānugānu* (Jiṅḡla rāga). There is much of universal

wisdom and touching poetry in his songs. He is above age and country.

He preached the philosophy of absolute music through precept and example. He showed how self-realization through music was possible. The heights that Saṅkara, reached in the realm of philosophy, Tyāgarāja has managed to reach in the realm of music. He spread his message of music from Tiruvaṛiyār itself, without undertaking a propagandist tour for the purpose.

### H I S T A L A S

The time-measures figuring in Tyāgarāja's compositions are: Ādi, Rūpaka (Chaturas'ra), Tripuṭa (Tis'ra), Jhampa (Mi's'ra), Mi's'ra Chāpu (3+4), Khaṇḍa Chāpu or Ara Jhampa and Ādi tāḷa (Tis'ra gati and Khaṇḍa gati). His compositions like, '*Nājivādhārā* (Bilahari rāga), *Dārini telusukonṭi* (S'uddha Sāvēri rāga), *Sādhiñchenē* (Ārabhi rāga Pañcharatna), *Endukō bāga teliyaḍu* (Mōhana rāga) are not only learned disquisitions on the respective rāgas but also reveal his gifts at tāḷa prastāra. Even some of the dry prastāras are given a musical touch by him. All the possible and hearable prastāras of Ādi tāḷa are found in the above compositions. Tāḷa prastāra is the exhaustive analysis of the chosen tāḷa into all the possible component rhythmic patterns. His skill in weaving the alaṅkāra patterns of ancient music into the texture of his songs is also revealed in those compositions.

### R A G A P O R T R A Y A L

Tyāgarāja was a Divine messenger. His compositions are a veritable elixir. He has unfolded to us the melodic beauties of many rāgas not known before his time. As we

listen to his pieces, we derive pleasure, instruction and inspiration. Sublime music and sublime poetry have found a happy culmination in his compositions. In the matter of showing the beauty of the contour of rāgas, emphasizing the delicacy of their make-up and portraying their colourful details, he has reached the peak-level of excellence. In the case of closely related rāgas like Darbār and Nāyaki, he has successfully pictured to us their individualities and shown their essential points of difference. His isolation of Kharaharapriya has helped rāgas like Karnāṭaka Kāpi, Dīlipakam, Mañjari and Dēvāmṛtavarṣiṇi to acquire distinctive individualities.

The one question that is difficult to answer regarding his kritis is, whether the tune enhances the beauty of the sāhitya or whether the sāhitya enhances the beauty of the tune.

### HIS VOICE

Tyāgarāja had a high-pitched voice. His silvery voice was capable of sweeping flights in all the three octaves. His voice had a fascinating ring (ஈங்காரம்) about it. It was admitted by all in his time that he possessed a gandharva sārīram — the voice of a celestial singer. Whenever he halted on tāra ṣaḍja in the course of a kriti in the anupallavi or charaṇa, the effect was so superb, that his siṣyas stopped their singing and allowed the audience to listen to the lustrous tone of Tyāgarāja's voice. People with one voice exclaimed "When he sang, even the withered trees in the neighbourhood shed milk — பட்டமரமும் பாலாய் உருகும்" His voice was not of the plain type but one rich in harmonics and tone-colour bands. The fact that he was able to compose a kriti like *Dārini telusukonṭi* (S'uddha

Sāvēri rāga) when he was nearly seventy years of age is proof of the fact that his voice continued to maintain its responsive lustre and ravai jāti (ரவை ஜாதி) character even at that advanced age.

When Pañchanadayyar, father of Mahā Vaidyanātha Ayyar was once complimented by a friend on the fascinating character of his son's voice, he retorted "what is my son's voice, when compared to the fascinating and melodious voice of the great Tyāgarāja?" It may be pointed out that when Mahā Vaidyanātha Ayyar began to give concerts in 1856, some of the older musicians of the time remarked with great relief "Abba! After Tyāgarāja, at least we have one singer whose vocal music falls pleasingly on our ears".

### HIS DIET

Tyāgarāja maintained the lustrous quality of his voice right through his life through a regulated diet. He took great care about his health and voice. He took oil bath twice a week. For his oil bath, he used the oil obtained from sesame whose outer covering had been removed; (எள்ளின் தோலை நீக்கி, வெள்ளை எள்ளால் ஆட்டின எண்ணையைத் தேய்த்துக்கொள்வது வழக்கம்). He was systematic in his diet. His two disciples, Ayyā Bhāgavatar and Subbarāma Bhāgavatar grew vegetables like snake-gourd (புடலங்காய்) in a special garden for the use of their Guru. There was one disciple who served as cook after the demise of his Master's wife.

His diet was very simple and not expensive. He ate vetta kuzhambu sādham (i.e. rice soup) and tuvaiyal sādham (i.e.

rice mixed with chutney). He used dhal only after it had been properly fried and tamarind after it had been slightly burnt; (பருப்பை கம்; அதே மாதிரி புளியைச் சுட்ட மின்னரே அதை உபயோகிப்பது வழக்கம்). The vetta kuzhambu that he used contained dried vegetables (வெத்தல் — மணித்தக்காளி வெத்தல், கொத்த வரங்காய் வெத்தல், சுண்டக்காய் வெத்தல், அவரைக்காய் வெத்தல், சுக்கங்காய் வெத்தல், பாவக்காய் வெத்தல், வண்டக்காய் வெத்தல் போன்ற ஏழு வகையான வெத்தலு போட்ட வெத்த குழம்பையே சாப்பிடுவது வழக்கம்). He sometimes had these vettals fried in ghee and ate them. Everyday he had some kind of vetta kuzhambu prepared for him. The punctilious diet conduced to his spiritual strength and at the same time helped him to retain the purity and ring of his voice till his last days.

The following story that has been handed down will be of interest in this connection.

It is said that Tyāgarāja had a somewhat choleric temperament. As mentioned above, he used for his oil bath, oil extracted from sesame which had been dried in the sun after being cleaned and after its husk had been removed. Since his house had no terrace, he had the sesame spread in front of his house in the street for being dried. One day a boy of about 5 or 6 years of age from the opposite house, unintentionally entered Tyāgarāja's house by crossing the street and in so doing, trampled over the sesame. Tyāgarāja became furious and gave the boy a slap with his right hand, but very soon regretted his act. The parent of the boy in the meantime came near his son and Tyāgarāja spoke to him in apologetic terms. But the parent who was a Raoji was very much

touched and prostrating before Tyāgarāja said: "Sir! Why should you talk in this repenting manner? What has happened is only a trifle. I consider your slapping my boy as a blessing to him; the fact that your hastam (hand), has contacted my boy's body is in itself a blessing." So saying, he asked his boy to prostrate before the Great Composer. It is said that the young boy prospered later on in his life.

Tyāgarāja was also at times furious towards those disciples who strayed from the path of righteousness. Excepting for these trivial incidents, the Great Composer may be said to have been the Embodiment of peace, tranquility and kindness. The Divine music that he cultivated and practised had its salubrious and softening influence upon him.

#### REPETITION OF SANGATIS

Every saṅgati is sung twice in a kriti. There is a purpose behind it. The second rendering helps a listener to get a vivid aural impression of the varied portion of the theme. In songs which contain *Sāhitya bhāva saṅgatis*, the first rendering of a variation directs our attention to the varied part of the theme and the second rendering of it, directs our attention to the latent and subtle idea enshrined in the sāhitya and suggested by the saṅgati.

Tyāgarāja has composed in the largest number of rāgas ever attempted by a single composer. The number of rāgas in which he has composed exceeds two hundred — a record in Indian music. His compositions as now known and sung amount to a staggering total of more than a thousand.

His compositions contain fine *visrānti sthānas* or halting places. When good-voiced singers halt at those places, i.e.

pañchama or tāra ṣaḍja as the case may be, the æsthetic joy of listeners can hardly be described.

He paved the way for the future development of music along right lines. He has shown how a melodic system of music based on rāgas offers a rich and powerful medium for the portrayal of musical thoughts and ideas. The summit of melodic perfection is reached in his compositions.

He has reached Himalayan heights in the realm of pure melody. He plunged into the very springs of music and unravelled many of its mysteries. Most of his songs are in the form of touching appeals and intimate conversations addressed to his beloved Rāma in an innumerable varieties of situations. He was a facile composer. He has raised music from its concept of being an instrument of entertainment to the vehicle for the attainment of the highest spiritual bliss. *He has divinized music.* The highest flights of imagination are seen in his compositions. The most soulful music of India has been created by him.

Tyāgarāja, the adored of every saṅgīta rasika wrote in a sweet and sonorous style.

Many great men are associated with some *dōṣa* (flaw) or other. Tyāgarāja was singularly free from all these excepting for the slight choleric temperament referred to above. He rightly became an object of adoration. Unlike some poets, even on provocative occasions, he used dignified language.

### LESSON FROM HIS LIFE

The one significant lesson that we learn from his life is “Come what may ; as long as one adheres to the path of



righteousness, God's mercy is definitely on his side, though in haste, he may fail to see the ultimate fulfilment of God's Justice."

Tyāgarāja's life has a deep moral lesson for us. The sufferings that he had to undergo in the earlier part of his life for his innocence and uprightness and for the courage in sticking to his ideals deeply move us. When we listen to his songs like *Ē pāpamu* (Aṭhāṇā rāga), *Karuṇā samudra* (Dēvagāndhāri rāga), *Toli ne jēsina* (Suddhabaṅgāḷa rāga), *Toli nenu jeyu* (Ravichandrika rāga), *Nāyeḍavañchana* (Nabhōmaṇi rāga) and *Nādupai balikēru* (Madhyamāvatī rāga), wherein he pours forth his sufferings, our emotions are deeply stirred. Our sympathies go out to him in abundance. We begin to adore him.

In his didactic pieces, he conveys his teachings and ethical ideas in a telling manner (See his kritis like *Sāntamu lēka*, *Buddhi rādu* and *Samayamu telisi*).

#### MUPPANAR'S HELP

The Mūppanār of Kapisthālam made arrangements for the feeding and clothing of disciples who came to learn Tyāgarāja's compositions from Umaiyaḷpuram Kṛṣṇa Bhāgavatar and Sundara Bhāgavatar. The pupils were also given the weekly oil baths. As long as Kṛṣṇa Bhāgavatar continued to certify to their progress in music, they continued to enjoy the facilities in the choultry of Kapisthālam.

## CHAPTER XIII

### NOTES ON SOME OF HIS KRITIS

*Ēla nī daya rādu* (Aṭhāṇā rāga).

There is a tradition current in the family of the Umaiyaḷpuram disciples of Tyāgarāja, that the suggestion to perform the 96 crores of Rāma nāma emanated from a certain \*Uñchavritti Bhāgavata.

Tyāgarāja's daily duty during his boyhood, included the removal of the flowers that had been performed as Archana to the Deity, the previous day. Of the several varieties of flowers used for the pūja, he found that the Pārijāta puṣpa (nyctanthes) stuck on to the Idol on account of a juicy substance in it. These stuck-up flowers had to be removed from the Idol carefully. The desire arose within him that he must offer to God an unfading and ever fresh garland in the shape of kīrtanas.

When under the tutelage of Soṇṭi Veṅkaṭaramaṇayya, Tyāgarāja made amazing progress, the Guru was simply perplexed. Finding that after one year of tuition, he had nothing more to teach him, he called him one morning and blessing him from the bottom of his heart said "You have become a *Pāraṅgata* (great expert) in music. My name is going to be remembered by Posterity only on account of you i.e. as your Guru." These prophetic words of Soṇṭi Veṅkaṭaramaṇayya became only too true.

Tyāgarāja is the rare example of a siṣya to receive the hearty blessings of his Preceptor.

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\* This person is the same as Haridas referred to on p. 25.

As already mentioned, Tyāgarāja started composing in his teens. His earlier compositions are the product of conscious attempts, though they came forth spontaneously and without special effort. A certain Uñchavritti Bhāgavatar passed along his street every morning, singing sacred songs. When he neared his house. Tyāgarāja invited him to sit on the pial of his house. He washed his feet and performed *pāda pūja* with intense devotion. He then filled the Uñchavritti vessel with the required rice. The vessel having become full, the Bhāgavatar straightaway returned home. This thing happened day after day. The Bhāgavatar was very much touched by the devotion of Tyāgarāja and he made enquiries of neighbours concerning him. He came to know of his scholarship and attainments in the realm of music. He wanted to do something for him in return.

Next day the Bhāgavatar passed through Tirumañjana Vidhi. Tyāgarāja welcomed him and as usual, he and his wife performed the customary *pāda pūja* and filled the vessel with rice. The Bhāgavatar said unto him :—

“My dear man! I am very much touched by your bhakti. I am anxious to do something for you by way of gratitude. Giving *vidyā dānam* to you seems to be out of question since you are already learned. I wish to however suggest to you one thing. There is a long tradition in my family, that if a person recites 96 crores of *Rāma nāma* with steadfastness and devotion, S’rī Rāma will give dars’ana to him and bless him. I commend to you this idea.” So saying, he gave him Rāma mantra upadēs’a and went away.

Tyāgarāja took this as a Divine Command and he and his wife started the recital of Rāma nāma. The Uñchavritti

Bhāgavatar was not seen from the following day onwards and even vigorous searches for him proved unavailing. This further strengthened the conviction of Tyāgarāja and he continued his Rāma nāma recital with even greater zeal and devotion. This recital is referred to as *Rāma tapas* and not merely as Rāma japam. At the conclusion of the 96 crores, Tyāgarāja prepared himself to see S'rī Rāma. He saw the entire world around him as *Rāma mayam*. He waited for three months and more patiently, but finding no signs of Rāma dars'an, a feeling of despair overtook him.

One day, after finishing his midday meal, he was scanning through the Manuscripts containing some of his compositions. At about 11-30 a.m. he heard somebody tapping the door. As he went and opened the door, he was thrilled to see S'rī Rāma in the form of Protector of the Performers of Yajñas and forthwith sang the kriti in Aṭhāṇā rāga, mentioned above, starting with the anupallavi '*Bālakanaka maya*'. The song is particularly descriptive of S'rī Rāma as he saw Him. The question in the pallavi "Why will you not shower your grace upon me? Why this unmindfulness?" truly reflects the mental state of Tyāgarāja at that time.

This incident confirms the eternal truth that until the moment of *Divine Grace* actually comes, nothing will materialize. Tyāgarāja completed the recital of 96 crores of Rāma nāma, but he had to wait for the *Kaṭākṣa nimiṣa*, before he could see S'rī Rāma with his own eyes.

Having had Rāma dars'an, a feeling of Joy came over him. He followed up the piece *Ēla nī daya rādu* with *Rāma ninnē namminānu* in Husēni rāga

*Vēṇugāna lōluni* (Kēdāragaula rāga).

When Viṇa Kuppayyar left his home in Tiruvottiyūr, he came and lived in the house No. 89, Ramaswamy Street, George Town, Madras. This house was purchased by Kōvūr Ēkāmbara Mudaliyār (brother of Kōvūr Sundara Mudaliyar) and given away as a gift to Viṇa Kuppayyar. The title deeds with Mr. Rāmasvāmi Ayyar, the husband of Tiruvottiyūr Tyāgayyar's grand-daughter will bear this out.

When Tyāgarāja came to Madras, Viṇa Kuppayyar naturally invited his Guru to pay a visit to his house in Ramaswamy Street. Viṇa Kuppayyar conducted an utsavam in his house during the time of Chitrā Pournami and Vināyaka Chaturthi. The festival went on for 10 days and leading vidvāns of the time vied with each other in performing during the festival. During the festival time, the family Deity S'ri Rādhā Rukmini s'amēda Vēṇugōpālasvāmi was beautifully decorated and kept in the main hall of the house. Concerts took place in the sannidānam of the Deity. Tyāgarāja's visit to Kuppayyar's house evidently synchronized with one of these festivals. When Tyāgarāja saw the Deity, he was moved and forthwith the piece "*Vēṇugāna lōluni*" came out from him spontaneously. The charaṇa of this song vividly describes the decorated Deity. The statement in the pallavi "*Veyi kannulu kāvalene*," has a significance. His visit to Kuppayyar's house was subsequent to his visit to Tirupati. In the song, "*Veṇikatēsa ninnu*" in Madhyamāvati rāga, he expressed "To behold you Lord! Ten thousand eyes are required". This idea is echoed in the Kēdāragaula song when he said in the pallavi "It requires a thousand eyes to behold the Lord Vēṇugānalōla."

Viṇa Kuppayyar's wife lived for 90 years and worshipped Tyāgarāja as God.

*Oka māṭa oka bāṇamu* (Harikāmbhōji rāga).

During Tyāgarāja's time, \*pre-puberty marriage was the one in vogue. So, when his first wife passed away after five years of marriage, one can reasonably assume that Tyāgarāja has not had the opportunities of tasting the pleasures of married life. In the meantime his father passed away. His elder brother acted as the guardian and made his brother marry a second wife. His elder brother passed away when Tyāgarāja was about forty-five years of age. Tyāgarāja lost his second wife after sometime. She left behind the child, Sītālakṣmi about 4 or 5 years of age. The mother-less child was taken care of by many, including his disciples. Pallavi Duraisvāmi Ayyar used to take the child Sītālakṣmi to his house in Padinaindu maṇṭa-pam, feed the child and bring her back to Tyāgarāja's house.

Jalpēs'an's sons, Subrahmaṇyan and Paṭṭābhirāman seriously resolved, in consultation with their relatives to request their uncle, Tyāgarāja to get married, in view of the fact that there was a young mother-less child and somebody was required to look after her. Tyāgarāja stoutly refused to get married. When the nephews again came on another day and re-iterated their request, he replied with the song, "*Oka māṭa oka bāṇamu okapatni vraduḍē manasa*". Thus Tyāgarāja remained a widower for the rest of his life i.e. for a period of nearly thirty years and gave his undivided attention to the composition of kritis which for their *Saṅgita mādhurya* will long remain unsurpassed.

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\*It was the custom in Brahmin families to get the girls married before they attained puberty. After they attained puberty, a special consummation ceremony was held.

*Telisi Rāmachintanato* (Pūrṇachandrika rāga).

Whenever Tyāgarāja found a disciple of his, departing from the path of righteousness, he (the great rasika that he was) instead of directly admonishing him, sang a song addressed to his manas and indirectly pointed out to him and through him to others, what was the righteous code of conduct.

It is said that Tanjore Rāma Rao once taught a few of Tyāgarāja's kritis to the daughter of Muddu Pazhani (முத்து பழனி) the famous poetess and author of the renowned work in Telugu "*Rādhikā svāntam*". Tyāgarāja did not relish this and composed the song *Telisi Rāma*. The reference in the second charaṇam: *Rāmāyaṇi chapalākṣuḷa pēru* significantly relates to this incident.

The purport of the song is "Know ye well the (true) Rāma and contemplate on His great qualities". He impresses on us this teaching by referring to two other words like, *Aja* and *Arka* which also have plural meanings.

There is an interesting story about this song.

Once the Pontiff of the Marudānallūr Maṭh happened to come to Tiruvaiyār along with his disciples. The Pontiff had been giving Rāma mantra upadēśa to a number of people. The disciples of the Pontiff heard Tyāgarāja's śiṣyas singing the kriti, "*Telisi Rāma*". They laughed amongst themselves remarking "What is this *Telisi Rāma*" as if one can contemplate on Rāma without knowing him and so on. This reached the ears of Tyāgarāja. The holy Pontiff of the Marudānallūr Muṭh and his śiṣyas were invited to attend the next Ēkādaśī bhajana in Tyāgarāja's house. In the course of the bhajana, at the conclusion of the song, Tyāgarāja called out "Pañchāpakēśa"! There was no response. Again he called out "Pañchāpakēśa"! and there was no response.

During the third time he called out “*Pūvanūr Pañchāpakēs’a*”! Immediately came the response from the particular sishya “Here I am Sir. May I know what I should do”.

Tyāgarāja hesitated for a while and replied, “You may resume your seat”.

This incident served to clarify the doubt in the minds of the disciples of the Svāmiji of Marudānallūr Maṭh. The Pontiff understood the significance of the song and the incident.

Tyāgarāja had at that time, three disciples with the same name *Pañchāpakēs’an*. When he called out during the first two times, merely *Pañchāpakēs’a*, the three disciples did not know whom he was calling. When he called “*Pūvanūr Pañchāpakēs’a*”! the particular disciple responded.

Tyāgarāja’s idea in the *Pūrṇachandrika* piece was “Discern the Rāma, the true God-head and think of Him steadfastly and with devotion. What is the use of saying Rāma, Rāma, Rāma, all the while thinking of Rāmā, (lady) and so on.

*Kāru bāru* (Mukhāri rāga).

In this kriti, after paying a tribute to Rāma’s greatness as a Ruler, Tyāgarāja, describes what was *Rāmarājya* and how the people in his glorious Kingdom lived :

- (1) The inhabitants of the Capital as well as the Provinces and the Rīṣis (Sages) were perfectly happy ;
- (2) There was plenty of rain (மாதம் மும்மாரி பெய்தது) and this is of great importance in an agricultural country like India ;
- (3) People were proficient in all branches of learning ;



- (4) People lived to a ripe old age (தீர்க்கதாயுஸ்); and
- (5) They were free from the evil qualities of pride and anger.

*Kṣiṇamai tirugā* (Mukhāri rāga).

This is one of his last day compositions, composed probably a few days before his niryaṇa. Herein he gives a parting message as it were to mankind. The message is "What conduces to Everlasting Bliss is the Bhajana of Rāma. All else, including the fruits of Yajña (Holy Sacrifice), Japa (Prayer) and Tapa (Penance) lead only to re-birth, resulting in our becoming once again a prey to temptations and evil deeds.

*Syāma sundarāṅga* (Dhanyāsi rāga).

From the time Tyāgarāja made the euphemistic utterance towards the close of the last Ēkādas'i bhajana performed by him (see p. 122) the more shrewd amongst his disciples guessed that he was going to shake off his mortal coil on the coming Puṣya Bahula Pañchami Day. The news trickled out and countless numbers of persons poured into Tiruvaivār, day after day to witness the glorious end of the great bhakta. Some of them were speculating as to how he would pass away. Contrary to the expectations of the generality of the people, Tyāgarāja continued to be hale and healthy and even on the last day, he had his daily bath and performed pūja as usual. As he sat in yōga samādi and felt of his *prayāṇa kāla* (approaching end) he threw a piece of cloth on his head and forthwith the kapālam opened and his soul left the body. So Tyāgarāja's is the extraordinary case of a person who gave up this life through volition. This process is hinted at by Bhagavān in the

*Bhagavad Gita* Chapter VIII, S'lokas 9 and 10. The piece *Syāma sundarāṅga* in Dhanyāsi rāga, a kriti already composed during the middle period of his life, was sung by him that morning. It was morning time and the thought of singing his favourite song in Dhanyāsi rāga naturally flashed across his mind. This song contains the positive assertion that Rāma was his *Iṣṭa Daivamu* — favourite Deity. There is also the hint thrown out in this song that he was not different from Rāma, Himself.

Sojiri Sītārāmayya, who had already learnt the song *Syāma sundarāṅga*, sang it before Tyāgarāja on the day following the Saurāṣṭra rāga episode referred to on p. 110. He made a beautiful niraval and sang kalpana svaras to the opening theme of the charaṇa. This drew praise from Tyāgarāja.

Sītārāmayya was called Soldier Sītārāmayya, because of his strong and sturdy build. Soldier later gave rise to the corrupt form Sojiri. The late Vasiṣṭha Bhārati of Pudukōṭṭai, an eminent scholar of the *Kamba Rāmāyaṇa* was the grandson of Sojiri Sītārāmayya.

#### *Nārada Pañcharatnam.*

The five kritis composed by Tyāgarāja in praise of Nārada, the *Nādabrahma riṣi* of Svarga loka are :

<i>Srī Nāradamunē Gururāya</i>	- Bhairavi rāga
<i>Srī Nārada nādasarasīruha</i>	- Kānaḍa rāga
<i>Nārada Gurusvāmi</i>	- Darbār rāga
<i>Nārada Gāna lōla</i>	- Aṭhāṇa rāga
<i>Vara Nārada</i>	- Vijayaśrī rāga.

*S'riraṅga Pañcharatnam.*

The five kritis composed by him in praise of Raṅganātha of S'riraṅgam are :

<i>Rājuvedāle</i>	- Tōḍi rāga
<i>Ō Raṅga s'āyi</i>	- Kāmbhōji rāga
<i>Jūtamū rārē</i>	- Ārabhi rāga
<i>Vinarādā nā manavi</i>	- Dēvagāndhāri rāga
<i>Karuṇa jūḍavayya</i>	- Sāraṅga rāga.

SONGS ON THE GREATNESS OF MUSIC, ABSOLUTE  
MUSIC, THE POWER OF MUSIC, ETC.

<i>Sanḡita jñānamu</i>	- Dhanyāsi rāga
<i>Sōbillu sapta svara</i>	- Jaganmōhini rāga
<i>Mōkṣamu galadā</i>	- Sāramati rāga
<i>Rāga sudhārasa</i>	- Āndōlika rāga.
<i>Sanḡita s'āstra jñānamu</i>	- Mukhāri rāga
<i>Nāda sudhārasam</i>	- Ārabhi rāga
<i>Nādōpāsana</i>	- Bēgaḍa rāga
<i>Ānanda sāgara</i>	- Garuḍadhvani rāga
<i>Svara rāga sudhārasa</i>	- Saṅkarābharaṇa rāga
<i>Srīpāpriya</i>	- Aṭhāṇa rāga.

In some of the songs, he emphasizes that one can attain God-head through contemplation of Nāda. Worship of Rāma as *Nādarūpa* and *Nādabrahmānanda rūpa* is emphasized in *Ē pāpamu* (Aṭhāṇa rāga) and *Talachi-nantanē* (Mukhāri rāga). Contemplation of nāda leading to *Sōham* is mentioned by him in the Bilahari piece, *Inta-kannānandamēmi*.

People who are not moved by music are referred to by Tyāgarāja as human stones !

Tyāgarāja, the saṅgīta smṛitikāra, was almost the first to glorify saṅgīta s'āstra jñāna i.e. knowledge pertaining to the science of music. In the kriti, *Ninu vinā sukhamu gāna* (Tōḍi rāga) he refers to Rāma as *Rāga rasika* i.e. one who took delight in appreciating rāgas. This impliedly means that Rāma enjoyed absolute music.

Tyāgarāja refers to musical instruments in the following songs :—

*Kaddanuvāriki* (Tōḍi) - Tambūra

*Koluvamaregadā* (Tōḍi) - Tambūra

He gives the daily routine of his life in the three charaṇas of this latter song.

*Samsārulaitēnēmi* (Sāvēri) - Viṇa

*Ataḍē dhanyuḍurā* (Kāpi) - Tambūra

*Sogasugā* (S'rīrañjani) - Mṛidaṅga and tāḷa

The finest example of the *Dhīruḍu* (musical hero) contemplated in the song, *Sogasugā* is Tyāgarāja himself !

*Prāṇanātha birāna* (Saṅkarā-  
bharaṇam) - Vēṇu (flute)

*Svara rāga sudhārasa* (Saṅkarā-  
bharaṇam)- Maddaḷa

Viṇa vādana i.e. Viṇa play is referred to in the kritis, *Mōkṣamu galadā* (Sāramati rāga) and *S'rī Nārada* (Kānaḍa rāga).

He emphasizes the importance of *Susvara gāna* i.e. accurate and pleasing, singing and performing in the pieces: *Etṭa dorikitivō* (Vasanta rāga) and *Sukhiyevvarō* (Kānaḍa rāga). In *Kaddanuvāriki* (Tōḍi) and in *Sogasugā mṛidaṅga* (S'rirañjani), he refers to *susvara* and *svara suddha* respectively.

Though God can be realized in diverse ways, the *saṅgita mārga* or the musical path is the easiest way to reach Him. Tyāgarāja has emphasized this pleasant path in very clear terms. Music being a *vis'rānti vidya*, it confers on the performer and listener, the much desired tranquility. It is the belief amongst musicians that Tyāgarāja being a *Siddhi puruṣa* and a *Puṇya puruṣa*, the thought of him once a day will result in health, wealth, prosperity and mental peace.

#### SONGS PERTAINING TO DARSANA OF RAMA AND NARADA

Tyāgarāja had the supreme fortune of seeing S'rī Rāma on four occasions, twice in physical form and twice in dream. The pieces, *Ēla nī daya rādu* (Aṭhāṇa rāga) and *Bhavanuta* (Mōhana rāga) were composed after he saw Rāma with his own eyes and the pieces *Kanugonṭini* (Bilahari rāga) and *Giripainela* (Sahāna rāga) were composed when he saw Him in his dreams.

He saw Nārada in the guise of a hermit, when the latter came and presented him with the musical work, *Svarār-ṇavam*. The song *S'rī Nārada munē* (Bhairavi rāga) vividly describes his thrilling experience and ecstasy on seeing the Divine sage. It is said that when Nārada came in the guise of a Sanyāsi, the composer was just commencing to take his oil bath. When the sage expressed a desire to

listen to his music, Tyāgarāja, not even minding that his head was partly besmeared with oil, began to sing. He sang for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours (see p. 26 for further details of this incident).

#### SONGS COMPOSED IN PRAISE OF TULASI

<i>Dēvī Srī Tuḷasamma</i>	- Māyāmālāvagaṇa
<i>Tuḷasī Jagajjananī</i>	- Sāvēri rāga
<i>Tuḷasamma māyīṇṭa</i>	- Dēvagāndhāri rāga
<i>Ammarāvamma</i>	- Kalyāṇi rāga.

He used to sing these songs during the days of Br̥ndāvana Dvādasī.

#### SIMILES, METAPHORS, PROVERBS AND SAYINGS

The figures of speech figuring in Tyāgarāja's compositions, provide an interesting study. The similes used by Tyāgarāja are all drawn from nature.

In the following songs, some interesting proverbs are seen :—

*Chālākalla* (Ārabhi rāga) — Kālamu pōnu, māṭalu niluchunu (காலம் போகும், வார்த்தை நிற்கும்) — words once spoken stay on, even with the passage of time.

*Manasu viṣaya naṭa* (Nāṭakurañji rāga) — Chevūṭiki upadēs'iñchinaṭu (செவிடனுக்கு உபதேசித்ததுபோல்) — like preaching to a deaf man.

In this song he makes a pointed reference to the penny-wise and pound-foolish policy pursued by some people.

*Evaritō nē delpudu* (Mānavati rāga) — Gaṇanātha sēya kōraga, kaḍu vānarunḍai tirēga (பின்னையாரை பிடிக்கக் குரங்கானதுபோல்); in the attempt to mould a Gaṇēs'a, a monkey resulted. This will be the literal translation of this proverb. But the significant meaning underlying this is, 'A person started doing a thing with the best of intentions but it resulted in something exactly opposite'.

*Enta muddō, enta sogasō* (Bindumālīni rāga) — Dutta pāla ruchi teliyu sāmīyamē (சுட்ட சுட்டி சுட்டுவம் கறிச் சுவை அறியுமோ?); can the pot know the sweetness of the milk?

The pieces, *Rūkalu padivēlunna* (Dēs'ya Tōḍi rāga), *Nāyeḍa vañchana* (Nabhōmaṇi rāga), *Kālaharaṇa* (S'uddha sāvēri rāga) and *Pāhi Ramāramana* (Varāli rāga) may also be studied in this connection.

Topical allusions are also contained in some songs and in the sīsa padyas of his operas. In the kriti, *Endukō bāga teliyaḍu* (Mohana rāga) Tyāgarāja says how people kept their money in safety by putting them in doubly woven bags (reṭṭu chañchu).

*Nādōpāsana* (Bēgaḍa rāga).

This kriti begins on the note madhyama. The commencing notes for compositions in Bēgaḍa rāga are usually the gāndhāra and dhaivata. There is a significance in this piece starting with a long *ma*. As pointed out by Śrī A. V. Raman, *ma* is the most important syllable in the Praṇava AUM. Since the sāhitya of this song deals with the greatness of Nādōpāsana, Tyāgarāja appropriately began it on madhyama.

Paṭṇam Subrahmaṇya Ayyar (1845 - 1902) followed Tyāgarāja in commencing his kriti, *Manasuna nera nammini* on the madhyama svara.

*Dinamaṇivams'a* (Harikāmbhōji rāga).

This kriti was composed during the middle period of his life. Tyāgarāja's fame as a spontaneous singer of kritis had spread far and wide. Many came to witness the phenomenon of his musical creations on Ēkādaśi days.

On the day when he sang extempore this kriti, there was in the audience a rising composer in Sanskrit. He had heard from many about Tyāgarāja's remarkable feats of musical extemporization in the form of brilliant kritis and he came personally to witness this musical phenomenon. There was a large gathering of scholars, musicians, devotees, admirers and disciples. Bhajana was going on. At the conclusion of a song, the disciples scented that Tyāgarāja was about to sing a new song. They got ready to record it. Forthwith came the piece, *Dinamaṇi vams'a* in all its lustrous beauty. Barely had he finished the pallavi, the rising composer referred to above, remarked that the sāhitya of the pallavi was faulty. Tyāgarāja turned back to see the person who made the unwarranted remark. He knew he was in the right and without being perturbed proceeded ahead with the song. In the charaṇa, he significantly introduced the words "Garvamu ēlē" (Why this pride)? The visitor construed the sāhitya as *Dinamaṇi vams'a tilaka! Lāvaṇya! Dina saraṇya!* and naturally thought that *Lāvaṇya* cannot stand by itself. But Tyāgarāja's intention was that the sāhitya should be construed as, *Dinamaṇi vams'a lāvaṇya tilaka! i.e. Beautiful ornament of the Solar Dynasty! Lāvaṇya* was an adjective qualifying *Tilaka*. *Di* in *Dina-*



maṇi and *ti* in tilaka occurred as yatis. The words Lāvaṇya and Saraṇya sound as beautiful antya prāsas-ending rhymes.

The visitor later understood the soundness of the sāhitya of the pallavi and quietly withdrew.

*Mummūrtulu gumi* (Aṭhāṇa rāga).

According to Tyāgarāja, Rāma was the Supreme God, even above the Trinity, Ś'iva, Viṣṇu and Brahma. The song, *Manasā Ś'rī Rāmachandrunī* (Īś'amanōhari rāga) bears this out. The kriti *Mummūrtulu gumi* proves this further. In the charaṇa of this song, Tyāgarāja says :—

“Once, the Holy Trinity, Ś'iva, Viṣṇu and Brahma, very much puzzled by the greatness of Rāma, tried to test their combined strength along with that of the latter. They wrote their guṇas and placed it on a scale pan and Rāma's guṇas were likewise written and placed on the other scale pan. The pan containing Rāma's guṇas was found to sink down through weight. The Trimūrtis got their doubt cleared and convinced of Rāma's greatness joined in praising him.”

#### C L A S S I F I C A T I O N

From the point of view of musical constuction, Tyāgarāja's kritis may be classified into :—

- (1) Very simple (*Ex. Vinavē ō manasā* - Vivardhani rāga)
- (2) Simple (*Ex. Sujana jivana* - Khamās rāga)
- (3) Medium (*Ex. Evarani* - Dēvāmṛtavarṣiṇi rāga)
- (4) Difficult (*Ex. Nājivādhārā* - Bilahari rāga)

- (5) Complicated (*Ex. Dārini telusukoṇṭi* - *S'uddha sāvēri rāga*)

The dhātu of *Koluvaiyunnāḍē* (Bhairavi rāga) is couched in the tāna style and that of *Ō Raṅga s'āyi* (Kāmbhōji rāga) in the ālāpana style.

From the point of view of the ideas contained in his sâhityas, his kritis may be classified into:—

- (1) Didactic (*Ex. Sāntamu lēka* - *Sāma rāga*)
- (2) Ethical (*Ex. Manasu nilṭa s'akti* - *Ābhōgi rāga*)

Herein he says, "If one has not the ability to control the manas, of what avail is the pūja performed by him? How can a wicked person hope to get purified by a plunge in the Kāvēri and Mandākini rivers?"

- (3) Songs of salutation (*Ex. Vidulaku mrokkeḍa* - *Māyāmālāvagaṭṭa rāga*)
- (4) Songs in praise of music (see p. 168)
- (5) Songs addressed to manas like *Vinave ō manasa* (Vivardhani rāga) and *Uṇḍēdi Rāmuḍokaḍu* (Hari-kāmbhōji) wherein he teaches indirectly.

### SONGS OF REPENTENCE

Sometimes he was obliged to perform *adharmic* (unrighteous) acts by his cruel brother and some of his songs of repentence are a consequence of them.

*Etula brōtuvo teliya*

- Chakravākam

*Duḍuku gala*

- Gaula

This piece belonging to the *Ghana rāga Pañcharatnam* contains an *anubandham* like the pieces *Sādhīñ chenē* (Ārabhi rāga) and *Endarōmahānubhāvulu* (S'rirāga).

<i>Prālabda</i>	- Svarāvali
<i>Tolinēnu jēyu</i>	- Kōkiladhvani
<i>Nōremi Sri</i>	- Varāli

### SONGS OF COMPLAINT

<i>Anāthudānugānu</i>	- Jīṅḷa
<i>Tolinē chēsina</i>	- S'uddha baṅgāla
<i>Nādūpai balikēru</i>	- Madhyamāvati
<i>Mariyādagādura</i>	- Saṅkarābharaṇam
<i>Ē pāpamu</i>	- Aṭhāṇa
<i>Nāyeda vañchana</i>	- Nabhōmaṇi.

That the triteness of a rāga does not in the least stand in the way of Tyāgarāja producing a brilliant composition is proved by kritis like *Anāthudānugānu* and *Nāyeda vañchana*.

In the songs like *Rāmā nī yēḍa* (Dilipakam), *Etṭulaina* (Sāma) and *Teliyalēru* (Dhēṇuka), he sympathises with the lot of those who were devoid of devotion.

### GADYA SAHITYAS AND PADYA SAHITYAS

In the sāhityas of Tyāgarāja, we come across padya (metrical) sāhityas and gadya (prose) sāhityas. In some kritis, we find that a part of the sāhitya is of prose and a part after a metrical pattern.

<i>Rāma Jaya Rāma</i>	- Yadukulakāmbhōji
<i>Tavadāsōham</i>	- Punnāgavarāli

<i>Veṇugānalōluni</i>	- Kēdāragaula
<i>Bhajana parula</i>	- Surati

The sāhityas of these four kritis are padya sāhityas.

<i>Viḍamu sēyavē</i>	- Kharaharapriya
<i>Manusu svādhīna</i>	- S'aṅkarābharaṇa

The sāhityas of these two kritis are gadya sāhityas.

A padya sāhitya may admit of being sung in a number of tunes. For example a Tiruppugazh hymn can be sung in a variety of tunes without offence to sāhitya bhāva. But a gadya sāhitya will not lend itself to this change. The sāhitya syllables herein are intimately interwoven into the music and they both become an inseparable texture. See for example, the dhātu and mātu of the kriti, *Viḍamu sēyavē*.

#### KRITIS WITH CHARANAS OF DIFFERENT DHATUS

In addition to the classical *Ghanarāga Pañcharatnam*, Tyāgarāja has composed the following kritis whose charaṇas have different dhātus;—

- |                                     |                     |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. <i>Ninuvina sukhamu gāna</i>     | - Tōḍi rāga         |
| 2. <i>S'rī Raghuvāra suguṇālaya</i> | - Bhairavi rāga     |
| 3. <i>Brōchēvārevārē</i>            | - S'rirañjani rāga  |
| 4. <i>Enduku nirdaya</i>            | - Harikāmbhōji rāga |
| 5. <i>S'rī Raghuvārāpramēya</i>     | - Kāmbhōji rāga     |
| 6. <i>Nāmoralanuvini</i>            | - Ārabhi rāga.      |
| 7. <i>Ni pada paṅkajamula</i>       | - Bēgaḍa rāga       |
| 8. <i>Maravakarā nava</i>           | - Dēvagāndhāri rāga |

The musical truth underlying the distinctive personalities of rāgas is revealed in each of these pieces.

## KRITIS COMPOSED DURING DIFFERENT PERIODS

Tyāgarāja's compositions may be grouped into those composed during his (1) Early, (2) Middle and (3) Later Periods.

(1) *Early period* compositions comprise those composed till his 30th year.

They are mostly Divyanāma kīrtanas and kritis with single charaṇas. Their musical construction is simple and are in Sanskrit and Telugu. The sāhityas in many cases consist of doxologies. They are mostly in praise of his Dhyāna mūrti, Śrī Rāma. They are in familiar rāgas.

*Ex. Brindāvana lōla* - Tōḍi rāga  
*Sujana jivana* - Khamās

(2) *Middle period* compositions comprise those composed between his 30th and 60th year.

Kritis in rare rāgas and kritis rich in music are seen during this period. Beautiful saṅgatis, literary flourishes and poetic ideas are also seen in them. The *Ghanarāga Pañcharatnam* and the following are examples :—

*Jānaki ramaṇa* - Śuddhasīmantini rāga  
*Manasu svādhīna* - Śaṅkarābharaṇa rāga  
*Koluvamaregadā* - Tōḍi rāga  
*Nāyeḍa vañchana* - Nabhōmaṇi rāga.

(3) *Later period* compositions are characterised by mature music and mature sāhitya. These are highly polished and delicately chisselled pieces.

*Evāri māṭa* - Kāmbhōji rāga  
*Ō Raṅga sāyi* - Kāmbhōji rāga

*Dārini telusukonṭi*

- S'uddhasāvēri rāga

*Nājivādhārā*

- Bilahari rāga

### RAMAYANA KIRTANAS

A bulk of his compositions pertain to the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. *Entani nē* and *Vāchāma gōcharamē manasā* are good examples of his *Rāmāyaṇa* Kirtanas.

Vālmiki, Tulasi Dās and Kambar may be styled *Rāmāyaṇa Kavīs* and Tyāgarāja the *Rāmāyaṇa Vāggēyakāra*.

*Vararāga layajñulu*.

Tyāgarāja and S'yāma S'āstri were good friends. The latter used to go to Tiruvaiyār to see Tyāgarāja and listen to his latest compositions. S'yāma S'āstri used to say that although his (S'āstri's) compositions were good, still there was something supremely magnetic about Tyāgarāja's compositions which made listeners get attracted to them, even at the first listening.

When S'yāma S'āstri came to Tyāgarāja's house, the latter's disciples used to murmur amongst themselves "Today sure and certain, we are not going to have our meal before 2 p.m. These two composers will go on singing and talking *ad infinitum*."

Tyāgarāja kept his house very clean. Nobody was allowed to spit in the courtyard of his house. But S'yāma S'āstri alone was allowed the privilege of spitting in the court yard. S'āstri had an undue fondness for chewing betel leaves and he was thus saved the trouble of going to the backyard of the house everytime to spit. When S'yāma S'āstri left, the disciples washed and cleaned the place thoroughly.

There was an understanding between the two composers that each should have the opportunity of listening to the new compositions of the other through their respective disciples.

When S'yāmā S'āstri completed the piece, "*Talli ninnu nera*" in Kalyāṇi rāga, he taught it to his disciples. They later on went and sang it before Tyāgarāja. This kriti is set in the reversed pattern of Chāpu tāla i.e. in the rhythm of 4+3, instead of the normal rhythm of 3+4. The disciples who had exaggerated notions of their proficiency in rāga and laya, sang this piece with an artificial emphasis on the rhythmical set up of the piece, and at the cost of rāga bhāva. Tyāgarāja got annoyed and in great distress said "You have miserably failed to grasp the rhythmical construction of the piece. You have smothered the piece and you have sinned against the Great Composer". Soon afterwards he sang the kriti in Cheñchukāmbhōji rāga, "*Vara rāga layajñulu*". The sāhitya of the song in essence means, that those who did not know even the fundamentals of music went about masquerading as experts in rāga and laya.

On another occasion, Tyāgarāja heard the newly composed song "*Durusugā kriṣa jūchi*" in Sāvēri rāga from the disciples of S'yāmā S'āstri. They rendered the song well. Tyāgarāja was very much impressed by the richness of the rāga bhāva in the song. But he sent word to S'yāmā S'āstri "I am sorry that in this highly beautiful song, you should have prayed to Dēvi to confer upon you just a healthy and strong body. You could have asked for something more noble like the perpetual liberation from the cycle of births and deaths". S'yāmā S'āstri recognized the wisdom of Tyāgarāja's remarks and acknowledged the same gracefully.

## CHAPTER XIV

### SOME MISCONCEPTIONS : ANECDOTES

1. There is a misconception that Tyāgarāja was poor and that he had to eke out his livelihood through uñchavritti. Tyāgarāja had enough landed property even after partition. He was above want. But he performed uñchavritti, just to show the dignity underlying this ceremonial begging sanctioned by Hindu religion. It is only those who have been initiated into the bhāgavata cult that can validly take to Uñchavritti and not all and sundry. The sense of pride, conceit and intellectual haughtiness all vanish when one takes to uñchavritti.

During the middle and latter parts of his life, when he had to feed a number of his disciples and other visitors, the uñchavritti became a necessity and as mentioned on pp. 20 and 21 he went out on uñchavritti once a week. The disciples participated in the uñchavritti bhajana with great enthusiasm. The street bhajana gave an opportunity to Tyāgarāja to sing his divinely inspired compositions and hundreds congregated to listen to his music and derived spiritual exaltation.

2. The kriti *Ēla nī daya rādu* in Aṭhāna rāga is not his first composition as mentioned by some writers. It is only the first kriti composed after the completion of the recital of 96 crores of Rāma nāma. As already mentioned he started by composing *Divyanāma kīrtanas*. The words



'*Bāluḍagu*' in *Nēpogaḍakunṭe* and '*Bāluḍaina*' in *Innāḷḷu nannēli* (Ghaṇṭā rāga) definitely establish that they are the compositions of his youth period. The many kritis wherein he refers to the tribulations that he had to suffer at the hands of his brother and his coterie all belong to the early period of his life. The kritis *Endukō bāga teliyaḍu* (Mōhana rāga), *Kalinarulaku mahimalu* (Kuntaḷavarāli rāga), *Nādupai balikēru* (Madhyamāvatī rāga), *Anāthuḍanugānu* (Jiṅḡla rāga), *Eṭulakāpāḍuduvō* (Āhiri rāga), *Indukābutṭiñchitivi* (Bhairavi rāga), *Ē pāpamu* (Aṭhāṇa rāga), *Ennāḷḷu nī dōva* (Kāpi) and *Prālabdamitṭuṇḍaga* (Svarāvali rāga) all contain references to the cruel men as *Narulu*, *Kalinarulu*, *Kalimānavulu*.

In spite of his cruelties, Tyāgarāja desired to reform his brother and turn him to virtuous ways of life. Since he was senior to him in age, he had to convey his teachings in an indirect manner i.e. through *avāntara vākyas*. That accounts for his addresses to manas or to Rāma in all these songs.

Further kritis like, *Doruguna iṭuvanṭi sēva* (Bilahari rāga) and *Mari mari ninnē moraliḍani* (Kāmbhōji rāga) were composed long before the *Nidhi chāla sukhamā* episode. The kritis *Bhavanuta* (Mōhana rāga) and *Kalugu nā pada* (Pūrṇa-lalita rāga) were composed on the night of the partition of the property between the two brothers. When Tyāgarāja was driven out and asked to stand in the street by his cruel brother, the saint's wife also followed her husband and stood in the street. The virtuous men and nobler souls in Tiruvaiyār were shocked at this cruel act of Jalpēs'an. They forthwith reported the matter to the local Tahsildār who came and effected the partition of the house and their land and

also caused the partition wall to be built between the partitioned portions of the house. In the evening, Tyāgarāja and his wife entered their portion of the house. In the confusion and agony caused by the day's events, Tyāgarāja's wife had not prepared the food. It was on that night, that Rāma came along with Sita and Āñjanēya and which led to the compositions, *Bhavanuta* and *Kaluguna*.

The day of partition was a pradōṣa dinam.

3. *The name of Tyāgarāja's mother*:— There are the two versions that her name was *Sāntamma* and *Sitamamma*. Narasimha Bhāgavata in his Preface to *Tyāgarāja Kīrtanalu* published in 1908 mentions that her name was *Sāntamma*. According to the other versions her name was *Sitamamma*. There is the following significant śloka that has been handed down:—

Sitāmbā garbha jātāya Pārvatī Kamalēchita :

Dvibhāryā samyutāya Śrī Tyāgarājāya maṅgaḷam |

In the kriti, *Sitamamma*, *māyamma*, Tyāgarāja indirectly refers to his parents as Sitamma and Rāmuḍu. The fact that he gave the name, Sitālakṣmī to his daughter is proof of the fact that his mother's name was Sitamma (In South India, it is the custom in many Hindu families, to name the first son born in a family with the name of his paternal grandfather and to name the first daughter born in a family with the name of her grandmother i.e. father's mother).

The solution to the dual names lies in the fact, that it is the custom in some Telugu families as also in some families of Mahrāṭṭas, to give a new name to the girl after her marriage.

Thus it is possible that Tyāgarāja's mother was named Sānta at her birth and after her marriage with Rāmabrahmam was given the appropriate name of Sīta by Rāmabrahmam's elders.

4. The Ghanarāga Pañcharatnam belongs to his middle period. It is not correct to say that *Endarō Mahānubhāvulu* (S'rīrāga) was composed when Shaṭkāla Gōvinda Mārār visited him (see pp. 70 & 71). There were some jealous musicians in Tiruvaiyār at that time who though convinced of the superior beauty of Tyāgarāja's kritis, yet doubted if Tyāgarāja had svarajñānam. As an answer to this and to help his disciples to have compositions which will serve as vocalizes, he composed these five gems with svara sāhitya.

5. *Dēvi's conversation with his wife.*

One day Tyāgarāja went out and returned home. As he entered his house, he heard somebody talking to his wife. When he came in, the person who was talking with his wife disappeared. By a divine flash, he inferred that it was S'rī Dharmasamvardhani, the Deity of Tiruvaiyār temple that was talking to her. He immediately composed in Her praise, songs like *Nanuganna talli* and *Sivē pāhimām*.

*Dārini telusukonṭi* was not composed by him at that time. This song was composed at a much later period at Tiruvottiyūr during his historic pilgrimage to the North. Tiruvottiyūr is also known as Ādipura and the Deity is referred to in the songs constituting this Pañcharatnam as Ādipuris'vari, Ādipuramuna nelakonna, etc. Viṇa Kuppayyar in his song '*Nāmoralākiñchi*' in Dhanyāsi rāga in praise of Tripurasundari of Tiruvottiyūr refers to Her as Ādipuris'vari.

## A N E C D O T E S

1. *Tiruvārūr Kamalam* had her training in Bharata nāṭya under the famous Nāṭyāchārya and composer of Telugu padas, Muvvanallūr Sabhāpati Ayyar. On account of the excellence of his compositions, he was called *Chinna Tyāgarāja* i.e. Junior Tyāgarāja. When he dressed himself up as a lady and danced it was said that it was a superb spectacle. The dances were rendered with such grace and feminine charm that the spectators could hardly believe that the person who danced was a gentleman in a lady's costume. His Padas bear the signature: *Rājagōpālā*. He has also composed many *nirūpaṇams* or story songs for the purpose of Kālakṣhēpam. Tiruvārūr Kamalam is the mother of the wellknown dancer of the latter part of the 19th century, Tiruvārūr Gñānam.

When Tiruvārūr Kamalam finished her training in Bharata nāṭya under Sabhāpati Ayyar and received his customary blessings before starting on her professional career, the Guru suggested that she can also get the blessings of Tyāgabrahmam of Tiruvaiyār but warned her at the same time, that to see him and get his blessings was a very difficult task. However she resolved within her mind to get the blessings of the Sage of Tiruvaiyār.

Subsequently, she went to Tiruvaiyār and contacted Tillasthānam Rāma Ayyaṅgār through a friend. Rāma Ayyaṅgār said "Introducing you to my Master is an impossibility but I shall give you a clue. In the evenings, sometimes before going to the Kāvēri river for *Sandhyā vandana*, he may sit for a while on the pial of his house and chat with the visitors and disciples. You may seize that

opportunity and just come and prostrate before him and get his blessings.

Accordingly, she took up residence in a house near that of Tyāgarāja's and commissioned a friend to be on the watch. Every evening she dressed herself up and was waiting for the opportunity. Luckily on the third day of her coming, Tyāgarāja emerged from his house in a jovial mood and sat on the pial. He began chatting with the visitors and *śiṣyas*. The friend of Kamalam beckoned to her. She forthwith hurried from her house fully dressed, came to the front of Tyāgarāja's house and without any ceremony prostrated before him in the open street. Tyāgarāja was taken unawares and looking at Rāma Ayyaṅgār asked "Rāmu! What is this? Who is this lady that has come here?" She submissively replied, "I have received training in Bharata nāṭya under Muvvalūr Sabhāpati Ayyar. He has suggested that I may receive your blessings before embarking on my career; hence my visit to this place. Please excuse me for my intrusion". On hearing that she was a disciple of Sabhāpati Ayyar, Tyāgarāja fell in a condescending mood and asked her to perform abhinaya for some piece. She immediately performed abhinaya for the *kṛiti* in Tōḍi rāga "*Endu dāgi nāḍō*". The bhāvas were so expressive and suggestive and true to the spirit of the sāhitya that Tyāgarāja became fascinated. He then asked her to perform abhinaya for a *padam* of Kṣētrayya, which she did. Tyāgarāja then remarked to his disciples "She seems to dance correctly and nicely." Subsequently he addressed the dancer thus: "Tell your Guru Sabhāpati Ayyar that I am very much pleased to witness your dance performance." From that time onwards, Kamalam's reputation began to spread everywhere.

2. A *Musician from the North* once came to Tiruvaiyār and sang before Tyāgarāja. He took up a rāga and sang a detailed ālāpana including tāna and followed it up with a pallavi. All these went on for three days. He then desired to hear Tyāgarāja, sing. The latter said "Alright; Let me do so after the sandhyā vandana". So saying he finished the sandhyā vandana and went to the temple. Sitting in the sannidhi of Dharmasamvardhani, he felt he was in a mood to sing. He sent for his tambūra. When it came, he tuned it and sang his masterpiece in Kalyāṇi rāga "*Sundari nī divya rūpamunu*" starting from the anupallavi, *Manda gamana* as usual. He prefaced the kriti with a beautiful ālāpana in Kalyāṇi. His niraval for the theme, *manda gamana* and subsequent kalpana svaras for the same theme were so superb, that the musician from the North was moved. He removed all his jewels, presents, costly aṅgavastrams and shawls and placing them at the feet of Tyāgarāja said "Sir, yours is the *nija saṅgita* (true music); mine is all a sham. I very much regret having inflicted my superficial music on your ears". But Tyāgarāja however acknowledged the greatness of the visitor's music and asked him to take back all the shawls and presents.

It may be pointed out in this connection that music that is performed may be classified under the heads of :

- (1) *Bha ra ta rīti* (style) i.e. wherein the *Bhava* asserts itself and floats on the top like cream and the rāga and tāla are subservient to it i.e. are seen in the background. This style of singing will touch anyone and Tyāgarāja's singing was in this style. That was why the musician from the north became transported.

- (2) In *Ra bha ta riti* (style) the rāga bhāva asserts itself prominently, and the bhāva and tāla are consigned to the background.
- (3) In the *Ta ra bha riti* (style) the rhythmic element unduly asserts itself, throwing to the background the elements of bhāva and rāga.

3. During the very early period of tutelage of Umaiyaḷpuram Kṛṣṇa Bhāgavatar and Sundara Bhāgavatar, it so happened that one morning Tyāgarāja frowned on the two young disciples. The boys took the incident to heart and went away to their native place without telling their master. Not finding the boys during the afternoon lesson, Tyāgarāja made anxious enquiries about them. He feared that these sensitive boys might have committed some rash act. So he went to their village, Umaiyaḷpuram and got the news that the boys had come there safely. The boys were not at home when he went there. He returned back to Tiruvaīyār.

Veṅgu Bhāgavatar, the eldest brother of Kṛṣṇa Bhāgavatar and Sundara Bhāgavatar regretted very much the act of his two young brothers. He waited for a month and composed an aṣṭakam in praise of the Great Composer. Each stanza of this aṣṭakam ended with the phrase, "*Tyāgarājam bhajē*". He took his brothers along with him to Tyāgarāja and sang this aṣṭakam and requested the composer to take the boys once again as his śiṣyas. The Great Composer magnanimously re-admitted them and since that time they made amazing progress.

4. Amongst the various people who regularly attended Tyāgarāja's bhajanas was a Mahrāṭṭa Soldier who

had retired from service. Tyāgarāja noted him and touched by his devotion and sincerity, asked him one day if he desired to have anything.

The latter replied, "Sir, If you will kindly spare me the sandals that you are using while going to the backyard of your house, I shall treasure it as a sacred memento".

Tyāgarāja was touched by his bhakti and instead of giving him the pair of sandals he asked for, he desired to give him something superior. To the great joy of the soldier, Tyāgarāja gave him the pair of sandals he was using inside the house itself. It is said that this pair of sandals used by the Great Composer is still kept and worshipped in the family of the descendants of this soldier.

5. *Vikāṭakavi Kṛṣṇayyar* was a relative of the Pallavi vidvān Talanayar Sōmu Bhāgavatar. He was also a Samasthāna vidvān in Sarabhoji's Court. The Mahārājah honoured the distinguished homourist by presenting him with the birudas, sword and knife. Kṛṣṇayyar had moustachios and he rode on horseback. He rode from Tanjore to Tiruvaiyār on horseback twice or thrice every month to see Tyāgarāja and his Dhyānamūrti Śrī Rāma. Kṛṣṇayyar was a musician but not a Pallavi vidvān. He was proficient in five languages : Tamil, Telugu, Samskr̥t, Mahrāṭṭi and Urdu. He was so enamoured of the kriti, *Nēnendu vetakuturā* (Karnāṭaka byāg) that whenever he came to see Tyāgarāja, he requested the latter to sing that piece. The Great Composer invariably responded to his request and sang the piece along with his disciple, Tillasthānam Rāma Ayyaṅgār. The latter's voice very nearly approached that of Tyāgarāja in point of beauty, responsive ring and timbre.



It is said that Sarabha S'āstri, the great flutist, once heard the kriti *Nēnendu vetakuturā* from the Umaiyaḷpuram disciples and played it perfectly on the flute the next day, without practising it even once. On another occasion he played the kriti *Rāma ninnē namminānu* (Husēni rāga) after hearing it once from the Umaiyaḷpuram disciples. These speak volumes about the extraordinary powers and musical talents of Sarabha S'āstri.

On the samādhi of Tyāgarāja, the following is inscribed:-  
கிருஷ்ணன் - ஸுந்தரம் — புதுப்பிக்கப்பட்டது (சோபகிருதுவரு  
சித்திரை 28உ).

The meaning of this is, "the samādhi was renovated by the Umaiyaḷpuram disciples, Kṛṣṇa Bhāgavata and Sundara Bhāgavata on the 28th Chitra month of the Tamil year Sōbhakṛtu corresponding to 10th May 1903 (Sunday).

## G E N E R A L

The greatest gift of God to humanity is Tyāgarāja. Without his compositions, the musical world will be as dark as Erebus. He focussed all the beauties of rāgas in his kritis. His compositions have an enduring value. They sprang from the depths of his heart. He has fulfilled the mission of a true composer. He has created Beauty through the medium of musical sounds. He has kindled in the hearts of people, a passionate desire for art music. He has elevated mankind and brought solace to it. Composers like him are not the treasure of a particular province or country. He has transcended all limitations of race, language and

country. His compositions are the universal possession of mankind. The magnetic quality of his songs, their wondrous suggestiveness and the exuberance of his imagination have all earned for him undying fame. What is the Nation but for the legacy left by illustrious composers like Tyāgarāja!

Tyāgarāja was a true spiritual singer and offered his music to God and none else. He was very pious and read the *Rāmāyaṇa* every day. He was a composer with a living mind. His compositions are full of life. Some of his songs have a bearing on the problems of life. He was well up in *sāstra* and *anubhava*. The name of one composer known to all the strata of society, from the erudite expert down to the veriest tyro is Tyāgarāja.

In his compositions, we see the confluence of the triple factors of *bhāva*, *rāga* and *tāla*, in the correct and natural order of importance. His compositions are saturated with the triple elements of *saṅgīta bhāva*, *sāhitya bhāva* and *bhakti bhāva*. He was a past master in the art of weaving melodies even with tiny *rāgas*. In his handling of old *rāgas* like *Pratāpavarālī* and *Dīpaka*, a rejuvenated freshness is seen. He is a *Saṅgīta siddhānti*.

Indian music is a fathomless system. Tyāgarāja has dived deep into its mysteries and brought out rare gems of resplendent beauty. The consummate mastery of the technique of composition is revealed in his *kritis*.

Tyāgarāja was a highly cultured person. His compositions bear the stamp of this culture. It is a pleasure to

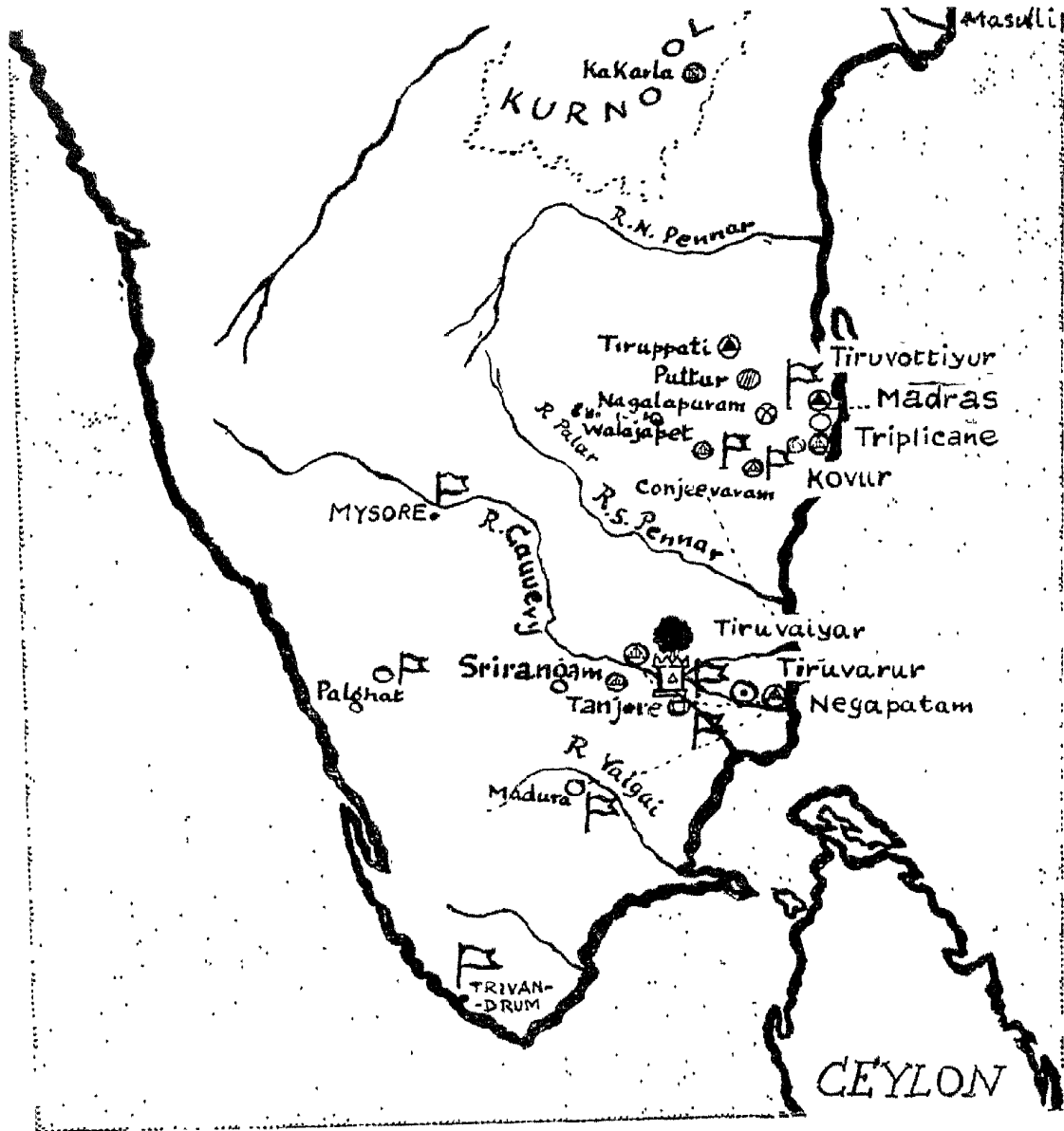
perform or listen to the compositions of highly cultured composers. The compositions of those who are not highly cultured but which however are characterized by a highly evolved technique may not touch the listeners.

Tyāgarāja combined in himself literary talents, musical excellence and intense devotion. He represents the soul of India. Music and religion are woven together in his life. His experiences of the *Divine Ānanda* have found clear expression in his musical utterances. To see him was to worship him. A wealth of musical ideas and poetic ideas lie packed in his compositions. He has reached lyrical heights of emotion in his compositions.

The Gōpichandana tripundra and the akṣaya mark on his forehead reflect the true Bhāgavata, Tyāgarāja. Tyāgarāja is an immortal. His compositions will endure till eternity.

Poets like Vālmīki, Kambhar and Tuḷasi Dās may be described as *Rāmāyaṇa Kavis* but Tyāgarāja has the distinction of being the *Rāmāyaṇa Vāggēyakāra*. Vālmīki no doubt set the Rāmāyaṇa to music and taught them to Lava and Kuśa. It is in this musical garb that the two lads rendered the epic poem in Śrī Rāma's court. But that music is now irretrievably lost. The verses of *Kamba Rāmāyaṇa* are even now sung to non-rhythmic music and the verses of the Rāmāyaṇa of Tuḷasi Dās are sung in a few tunes. But Tyāgarāja imported such a variety of rāgas and tunes for his Rāmāyaṇa kīrtanas that he stands without a parallel.

Map of South India showing the places connected with the life-history of Tyāgarāja and other details.



- [ PLATE XII ]
- Tiruvārūr* — Birth place.
- Kākarla* — Home of his ancestors.
- Tanjore* — The place where the Ēkapīṭha vīgraham can now be seen.
- Places visited* — Kāñchi, Wāḷājāpet, Tirupati, Kōvūr, Tiruvottiyūr, Mādras, Triplicane, Nagapatam, Srīraṅgam.
- Puttūr* — Where the dead person was brought back to life.
- Nāgalāpuram* — The scene of the thieves episode.
- Tiruvaiyār* — Containing his Samādhi.
- Flag* — Places noted for Tyāgarāja festivals.



## CHAPTER XV

### TYAGARAJA : BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE one Indian composer concerning whom an extensive bibliography exists is Tyāgarāja. His name is not only known throughout India but also in countries beyond. Some of his compositions have been published in staff notation and this has enabled people familiar with this system of musical notation to understand something of the genius of this Great Composer. As compared to a harmonical system of music (Samvādānuvāda Saṅgīta), a purely melodical system of music based on rāgas (Rāga saṅgīta) offers an inexhaustible source for the spinning out of melodies of variegated colour and beauty. Tyagaraja's compositions are an excellent instance in point. Not only has he composed numerous pieces in the known rāgas of his time, but has also composed brilliant kritis in rāgas created by him. There are also instances of rāgas already known but in which he has the distinction of being the first to compose and show their melodic individualities in a detailed and tangible form. The incidents in Tyāgarāja's life are full of interest and have a deep moral lesson for us. No wonder that an extensive bibliography concerning such an eminent luminary has sprung up.

There are both printed books and unpublished manuscripts relating to Tyāgarāja and his works. They are found in Samskr̥t, Tamil, Telugu, Malayālam, Kannaḍa and English. Some of them contain biographical accounts, some, his compositions in notation and the rest the bare texts of his songs.

The year of publication of the book, wherever known, has been given.

### IN TELUGU

1. Biography of Tyagaraja; a palm leaf manuscript written by his two disciples, Wālājāpēṭ Veṅkaṭaramaṇa Bhāgavatar and Tanjore Rāma Rao.
2. Biography of Tyāgarāja by Wālājāpēṭ Kṛṣṇasvāmi Bhagavatar (a note book).
3. Another note book containing stray notes on the life of Tyagaraja written by K. K. Rāmasvāmi Bhāgavatar (Circumstances that led to the composition of the opera, *Sītā Rāma Vijayam* are detailed here).
4. A number of note books containing his songs, some with notation and some without it.

All the above manuscripts as also the famous manuscript copy of Pōtanā's *Bhāgavatam* used by Tyāgarāja for his daily Pārāyaṇa are in the Saurāṣṭra Sabhā Library, Madurai.

One of the above note books contains a few chapters from the *Svarārṇava*, the reputed work presented to the composer by Rishi Nārada, according to tradition. That the composer was blessed by Nārada and that he was familiar with the contents of the *Svarārṇava* are respectively evident, from the mudra charaṇas of the Kritis, "*Srī Nārada munē Gururāya*" (Bhairavi), and "*Svara rāga sudhārāsa* (S'aṅkarābharaṇam).

Bhairavi :—

Rājillu viṇakalgu Gururāya Tyāga |  
Rājuni brochina Sadgururāya ||

Saṅkarābharaṇam :—

Rajitagiriś'uḍu nagajaku delpu Svarārṇava marmamulu |  
Vijayamugala Tyāgarājukerukē - Viś'vasiñchi delusukō  
ō manasā ||

Even in the ś'lōka attributed to Yājñavalkya :—

Viṇāvādana tattvajña: ś'ruti-jāti-vis'ārada :

we find the phrase Ś'ruti ś'āstra vis'ārada occurring and not Ś'ruti jāti vis'ārada (Ś'ruti ś'āstra vis'ārada is a more comprehensive concept than Ś'ruti jāti vis'ārada).

In the introductory portion of the *Svarārṇava*, topics like Nādōtpatti (origin of Nāda), Āhata Nāda and Anāhata Nāda, the three grāmas, mūrchchanās, grāma sādharāṇa, alaṅkāras, chaturaṅga prastāra and gāyaka dōṣas are dealt with. The nomenclatures given herein for the mūrchchanās are different from those given in the *Saṅgita ratnākara*. A section of the work is entitled "*Svara rāgasudhārāsa Grandhamu*". The ideas contained in Tyāgarāja's songs on the theme of the greatness of music like "*Mōkṣamu galadā*", "*Rāgasudhārāsa*" and "*Nādōpāsana*" are evidently amplifications of the ideas contained in the corresponding ś'lōkas in the *Svarārṇavam*.

In the rāga chapter (Rāgavivēka), brief saṅchāras are given for many rāgas. Rāgas which we come to know of for the first time, through his compositions, like Cheñchukāmbhōji, Vijayas'ri, Nāgasvarāvali, Navarasa kannāḍa, Sāramati, Janarājani, Garuḍadhvani, Bahudāri, Dilīpakam and Supōṣiṇi are mentioned here. The rāgas are arranged and presented in the order of the mēlas. New rāgas like Sāraṅga kāpi and Mālinimakarandam are also referred to. The latter rāga is mentioned as a Janya of the Nāṭa mēla and the ārōhaṇa



and avarōhaṇa are given as s r m p d n ś —  
ś n d p m r s.

5. Note books containing Tyāgarāja's songs in notation by Wālājāpēṭ Kṛṣṇasvāmi Bhāgavatar (In Walajapet Collection, Madurai).
6. Note books containing his songs in notation by Tiruvottiyūr Rāmasvami Ayyar, a disciple of both Wālājāpēṭ Kṛṣṇasvāmi Bhāgavatar and the Brothers, Umaiyālpuram - Kṛṣṇa Bhāgavatar and Sundara Bhāgavatar.

Short biographical accounts of the composer are given in the prefaces or introductions in the following six books :—

7. Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarsini by Subbarāma Dīkṣitar, Vol. I (1904).
8. Gāyakasiddharañjanam, Part II, (1905) by Tachchūr S'ingarāchārlu.
9. Ganendu S'ekharam (1912) by Tachchūr S'ingarāchārlu.
10. Narasimha Bhāgavatar's edition of Tyāgarāja Kīrtanas (1908).
11. Adi & Co. Edition of Tyāgarāja Kīrtanas (1912).
12. Tyāgarāja Hridayam by K. V. S'rīnivāsa Ayyaṅgar (1922).

The following three books give biographical and critical accounts of the composer.

13. Tyāgarāja Svāmi Charitram by Pasumārthi Kṛṣṇamūrti S'āstri (1926).

In the Introduction to this book, K. Nageswara Rao

Pantulu says, "Vālmiki is Kavi Brahma, Tyāgarāja is Gāyaka Brahma".

14. Sri Tyagaraja Charita by V. V. Narasimhacharlu.
15. Mahābhaktulu (Rāmdas & Tyāgarāja) by Vanguri Narasimha Rao (1937).

The following books contain the compositions of Tyāgaraja and other composers in notation :—

16. Sangita Svayambodhini by T. M. Venkatesa Sastri (1892).
17. Gāyaka pārijātam (1877).
18. Sangita kalanidhi (later editions).
19. Gāyaka siddhāñjanam (Part I) 1890 and (Part II) 1905.
20. Gānendu sekham (1912).
21. Bhagavat sārāmṛutam (Song Nos. 17 to 21) by Tachchur Singarāchārlu (1916).
22. Satakīrtana Svarāvali by C. S. Krishnaswamy Ayyar (1911)—contains 100 kritis of Tyāgarāja in notation.
23. Sangita Sampradāya Pradarsini, Primer and Vol. II by Subbarāma Dikshitar.
24. Sangeetha Pradāyini (1916) by K. Varadachari, K. V. Srinivasa Iyengar and Krishnamachari.
25. Sangeeta Vidya Darpanamu by U. Venkatasami (1910).
26. Ganabodhini by C. Tirumalayya Naidu (1906), Madras.
27. Gandharva kalpavalli by P. S. Rāmulu Chetty (1911).
28. Tyāgarāja Hridayam by K. V. Srinivasa Iyengar, Parts I to III (1922).

29. Sangeetha sudhāmbudhi by K. V. Srinivasa Iyengar (1923).
30. Gānabhāskaram by K. V. Srinivasa Iyengar (1918).
31. Sangeetha svaraprastāra sāgaram by Nādamuni Panditar (1914).
32. Sangeetha sarvārtha sāra sangrahamu (1897).
33. Gāna vidyā vinodini by Veena Basavappa, Hubli, (1915).
34. Sangeetānanda ratnākaram by Thenmatam Narasimhāchārlu (1917).
35. Sangeetha sudhā sangraham by Munisvami Naidu (1909), Tiruvottiyur.
36. Tyāgarāja's Pancharatnam by S. A. Rāmaswami Iyer of Tiruvottiyur (1933).
37. Sangeetha prachāra bodhini by Eka Subba Rao (1934).
38. Gānakalā chandrikā by Aripirāla Satyanārāyanamurti (1933).
39. Gānakalābōdhini by Mr. & Mrs. N. C. Parthasarathy (1951).

Books containing the texts only of the songs of Tyāgarāja and other composers

40. Gānāmrutham by T. M. Venkatesa Sastri (1903).
41. Bhagavat Bhajana Paddhathi by T. P. Kodandarama Iyer (1913).
42. Gāyana Gāyani Jana Pārijātamu (1898), Madras.
43. Gāyaka Lochanam by Tachchur Singarāchārlu (1902).
44. Indian Songs : Book I by P. Sambamoorthy (1926).

Manuscript copies of *Nowkā Charitram* exist in the Tanjore Saraswati Mahal Library and the Government Oriental

Manuscripts Library, Madras. The bare text of this opera has been printed by Vedam Venkatarāya Sāstrulu and a few other scholars. The bare texts of the other two operas of Tyagaraja, *Prahlāda Bhakti Vijayam* and *Sītārāma Vijayam* were printed in the latter part of the 19th century. The fact that Tyagaraja's operas were printed even before his kirtanas deserves our attention.

45. Prahlada Bhakti Vijayam, Text only, Vidwanmoda Tarangini Press, Jan. 10, 1868.
46. Nowka Charitram, Text only Edited by Minjūrpaṭṭu Rāmachandra S'āstri (1873).
47. Nowka Charitram, Text only, Edited by Seshachala Sastri (1885).
48. Nowka Charitram, Text only, Printed at the Jothishmathi Press (1892), Madras.
49. Sītarama Vijayam, Edited by Walajanagar Loka Narayana Sastrulu.
50. Sri Tyāgarāja Vijayamu (Harikatha) by Tadepalli Venkatasubrahmanya Sastri (1945).
51. Tyagaraja kirtanalu with meanings by Vissa Appa Rao (1948).

In the Preface to this book, Dr. Sir S. Radhakrishnan says that Tyagaraja belongs to the line of India's Rīṣis (sages). He ranks him along with such great names as Vālmīki, Vyāsa, Jayadēva and Pōtāna.

#### IN TAMIL

52. Sri Sadguru Tyagaraja Swamigal Charitram, by Brahmasri Panju Bhagavatar, 1917.

53. Life of Tyagaraja by Urattur K. Vaidyalingam Pillai, Kunjitapatam Co., Aiyankadai Street, Tanjore (1915).

54. Life of Tyagaraja by M. S. Krishna Iyer (1932).

In an appreciation of this work, H. H. Śrī Saṅkarāchārya of Kāmakōṭi Pīṭham refers to Tyāgarāja as one who has attained *Brahmībhāvam*.

55. Tyagabrahmopanishad by K. K. Ramaswami Bhagavata (contains the lives of Tyagaraja and his disciple, Walajapet Venkataramana Bhāgavata and also a few of Tyagaraja's compositions in notation).

56. Sangeetha Jothi, Tyagaraja : by Suddhānanda Bharatiyar.

57. Sri Tyagaraja Swamigal Charitra Surukkam by P. K. Murty, Madras.

The following books contain brief accounts of Tyagaraja in their Prefaces or Introduction.

58. Ramananda Yogi's Edition of Tyagaraja Kirtanas.

59. Karunāmruta Sagaram by Rao Saheb Abraham Pandithar (see the section relating to prominent musicians

60. Indian Songs : Parts 1 to 5 by P. Sambamoorthy - contains the bare texts of the songs of Tyāgarāja and other composers (1926).

61. Essays on Tyāgarāja by P. V. Krishnaswamy Ayyar, B.A., B.L. and Nagaraja Bhagavata (Tanjore Saṅgita Vidyā Mahā Jana Saṅgam, Fourth Quarterly Report, 1913).

The following books contain the compositions of Tyagaraja alone or Tyagaraja and other composers, in notation.

62. Dakshinātya Gānam, Parts I to IV by C. R. Srinivasa Iyengar.
63. Prathama Sikshā Prakaraṇam by C. S. Krishnaswami Iyer (1913).
64. Sangeetha Bālabodhini by B. S. Ramachandra Rao, Madras (1931).
65. Sangeethānubhava Sāra Sangrahaṁ, Parts I and II by Perungulam Srinivasa Iyengar (1910).
66. Sangeethāmrutanidhi by Rao Saheb C. M. Maduranayakam Pillai, Madras (1926).
67. Sangeetha Ratnāvali by K. V. Srinivasa Iyengar.
68. Sangeetha Rasārnavam by K.V. Srinivasa Iyengar (1918).
69. Sangeetha Chintāmani by K. V. Srinivasa Ayyangar.
70. Tyāgarāja Hridayam Parts I to III by K. V. Srinivasa Iyengar.
71. Gāna Manjūsha by Veena Anantakrishna Iyer Madras, (1934).
72. Sangeetha Sarvārtha Chintāmani by P. B. Srinivasa Iyengar
73. Advanced Music by N. Sundaram Iyer Madras, 1930.
74. Sangeethānanda Bodhini by M. Raghavachariar (1933).
75. Sangeetha Nunmanimalai or Tyagaraja Kirthanai (1912) Madras.

76. Kirtana Sagaram, Books I to IV by P. Sambamoorthy.
  77. Tyagaraja's Nowka Charitram by P. Sambamoorthy (1939).
  78. Sangeetha Kalānjanam by T. C. Tirunāvukkarasu, Madras (1930).
  79. Sangeetha Gāyakamrita varshini, Madras (1905).
  80. Swarasangeetha Ratnākaram by Alagiriswami Bhāgavatar, Lakshmi Vilas Press, Trichy (1906).
  81. Sangeetha Ratnam.
  82. Kriti maṇi mālai by Rangaramanuja Ayyangar (1947).
  83. Tyāgarāja's Pañcharatnam edited by Alattur Venkatesa Ayyar (1953).
  84. Rare and unpublished Kritis of Tyāgarāja : edited by T. V. Subba Rao (1951).
  85. Gāna Sēkharam by V. R. Mani.
  86. Gāna Tatvamrita Bodhini, *in Kannada* by Veena Basavappa, 1922.
- All music books published in Kannada and Malayalam contain select kritis of Tyagaraja in notation.

#### IN SANSKRIT

87. Life of Tyagaraja by Sundaresa Sarma, Tanjore.
88. Srimath Tyagaraja Vijaya Kavya by Muthiah Bhagavatar, Trivandrum (1941).

#### IN ENGLISH

89. Tyagayyar, the greatest musical composer of Southern India, by C. Tirumalayya Naidu (1910).

90. Tyagaraja by M. S. Ramaswami Iyer (1927).
91. Sri Tyagaraja, Musician-Saint, by N. Sanjiva Rao (1929).
92. Tyagayya by T. Lakshmana Pillai of Trivandrum (included in his collected volume of essays (1918).
93. Tyagaraja by V. Nāgamayya, Travancore State Manual Vol. III (1906).
94. The book, Syama Sastri and other famous figures of South Indian Music by P. Sambamoorthy, contains a short biography of Tyagaraja (1934).
95. Tyagaraja by B. V. P., Bangalore Press, Bangalore City (1946).

The following books contain brief accounts of or references to Tyagaraja or contain his songs in notation.

96. Oriental Music in European Notation by A. M. Chinnnaswami Mudaliar (1892).
97. Music and Musical Instruments of Southern India and Deccan, by Capt. C. R. Day (1891).
98. Music of Hindusthan by A. H. Fox Strangways (1914).
99. Music of India by H. A. Popley (1921).
100. The Story of Indian Music and its instruments by Ethel Rosenthal (1928).

In this book, the author calls Tyagaraja as the Indian Beethoven.

101. Psychology of Music by H. P. Krishna Rao (1923).
102. A first Book of Indian Music by M. Maheswari Devi, Jaffna, Ceylon (1930).



103. South Indian Music, Book IV by P. Sambamoorthy contains a chapter on Tyagaraja's style (1941).
104. South Indian Music: Book V, Chapter IX contains the varieties of Mudras used by Tyagaraja (1951).
105. Great Composers: Book I by P. Sambamoorthy contains a chapter on Musical Trinity (1950).
106. Teaching of Music by P. Sambamoorthy contains an appreciation essay on Tyagaraja's *Giripainela* (1947).
107. Pudukottah State Manual, Vol. II, Part I, page 870 mentions that Tyagaraja made a lamp burn by singing Jyōtisvarūpini raga.

The following books contain select melodies of Tyagaraja in staff notation.

108. Oriental Music in European Notation by A. M. Chinna-swami Mudaliar.
109. Ragas of Tanjore by S. Natarajan.
110. Indian Melodies in Staff Notation by P. Sambamoorthy.
111. Eleazor's Music Book : Contains some of the songs of Tyagaraja in staff notation; but in the place of crotchets and quavers on the staff, we have the corresponding solfa letters in Tamil printed thereon.

Translations of Tyagaraja's Songs and Operas.

112. The songs of Tyagaraja translated into English verse by Dr. C. Narayana Rao.
113. Lines of Devotion (Songs of Saint Tyagaraja) translated into English by A. V. S. Sarma (1954).

114. Tyagaraja Keerthanai translated into Tamil by Sm. M. K. Kausalya Ammal (Mrs. T. V. Venkatachariar, M.A.), Madras, 1928.
115. Tyagaraja Svamigal Keerthanai translated into Tamil by K. V. Krishnadas, Madras, 1939.
116. Samskrita Nowka Charitram by Kavi Venkata Suri (1947).
117. Panchal Charitra (the Nowka Charitra in song and verse in the Saurashtra language).
118. Kannan Lilai, Kakshi Oda Kummi by Srirangam Ranganayaki Ammal (Tamil version of Nowka Charitram in song and verse).

Articles in Journals, Souvenirs, etc.

119. A Vision of Tyagaraja by Y. Mahalinga Sastri, B.A., B.L. (pp. 98 to 103 Triveni, March-April 1930).
120. Hero as Composer (Tyagaraja) by T. V. Subba Rao, 1945, Souvenir of Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Hyderabad (Deccan).
121. Tyagaraja by P. Sambamoorthy (Tyagabrahma Mahotsava Sabha Souvenir 1940).
122. Raga Svarupa and Tyagaraja's Kritis and two Musical maps by Sambamoorthy and Articles on Tyagaraja by others (Sri Tyagabrahma Mahotsava Sabha Souvenir 1942).
123. Cauvery, Tamil Monthly, Kumbakonam, Special Number, for Tyagaraja's Festival (1942 January) contains articles on Tyagaraja's life and his contributions to Indian Music.

124. Parupalli Ramakrishnayya Pantulu, 61st Birthday Presentation Volume (contains Articles on Tyagaraja by Sir S. V. Ramamurti and Parupalli Ramakrishnayya Pantulu).
125. Addresses delivered year after year at the inauguration of the Aradhana Festival of Tyagaraja at Tiruvadi, Tanjore.
126. An Address on Tyagaraja delivered in March 1945 by P. Sambamoorthy at the Headquarters Hall of the Theosophical Society, Adyar, under the auspices of the Kalakshetra and published in the journal, Theosophist (June 1945).
127. A series of Articles on Tyagaraja contributed to the *Hindu* in the past years by Messrs. C. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, M. S. Ramaswami Iyer, Dr. T. Srinivasa-  
raghavan, Harinagabhushanam, P. Sambamoorthy and others.
128. The Journal of the Madras Music Academy and the Souvenirs of its Conferences as also the Souvenirs of the Indian Fine Arts Society and Tyagaraja festival souvenirs issued in Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta contain articles on Tyagaraja.
129. Daily Express Annual (1925) contains an article on Tyagaraja by C. R. Srinivasa Iyengar.

Journals containing the Songs of Tyagaraja in notation with meaning.

130. Sangita Satsampradaya Dipikai (Tamil) edited by Setlur V. Rangaswami Iyengar, 1912—1913. Vepery, Madras (also contains songs in notation from Pancha-  
taleswaram Vina Nilakanta Sasriar).

131. Gana Vidya Prakasini (Tamil) 1915—17.
132. Swadesamitran Weekly: Madras (Contributions by C. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, Umaiyalpuram Venkatarama Iyer and Turaiyur Rajagopala Sarma).
133. Tyagaraja Centenary Publications of,
  - (a) Gānakalā Pariṣad, Rajahmundry, and
  - (b) Sarasvati Gāna Sabha, Kakinada.
  - (c) Mulakanadu Sahha, Madras.
  - (d) Indian Listener New Delhi.

Other books containing accounts of Tyagaraja or the text of his songs or his compositions in notation and not noticed before.

134. Sangita Kalpadrumam by Harikesanallur Muthia Bhagavatar (Tamil) 1947.
135. Sangita Lakshanamu by P. Satyanarayana (Telugu) 1948.
136. Namavali Satakam by P. Sambamoorthy (Tamil).
137. Guide book on the Teaching of Music by P. Sambamoorthy and S. Parvati (1949).
138. Sangita Chandrika by Mahādeva Bhagavatar and Padmanabha Bhagavatar (Malayalam) (1937).
139. Bhajanavali: Published by Sri Ramakrishna Vidyalaya, Madras (1939).
140. Guru Kirtanaigal by Padmavati Ammal.

There are many instances of later composers writing Sahityas to the dhātus (tunes) of Tyagaraja's Kritis :

- (a) For the tune of the Kriti, *Srīpatē* (Nāgasvarāvali Raga), Subbarāma Dikshitar has composed the Sāhitya, *Srīvallipatē* (See Sangita Sampradaya Pradarsini, Vol. II, p. 5 of the Anubandham (B)).
- (b) For the tune of the Kriti, *Etulabrōtuvō teliya* in Chakravākam, Patnam Subrahmanya Iyer has composed a Sahitya, *Etula vrāsi yunnādō*.

Of the compositions composed in praise of Tyagaraja, the following may be mentioned:—

1. Dhyana slokas in Sanskrit by Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavatar.
2. Mangalashtakam by Venkataramana Bhagavatar.
3. Adi Gurustotra Panchangam in Telugu by Venkataramana Bhagavatar, beginning with the words, "S'rī Kākarlānvayaratnākara...".
4. A piece in Manipravalam (Sanskrit, Telugu and Saurashtra) by Venkataramana Bhagavatar beginning with the words, "S'rīmatpañchanadākhyā paṭṭaṇanivāsan"

#### KRITIS

5. Swamiki sariyevaranavacchu (Devagandhari rāga)
6. Gurucharanam bhajare (Saṅkarābharāṇa rāga)
7. Sadguruswamiki (Rītigaula rāga)
8. Tyagarajaswamiguruni (Kharaharapriya rāga)
9. Sri Tyagarajaswami mahimanu (Vāchaspati rāga)
10. Ramachandra nannu (Haridāsapriya rāga)
11. Ehi Sadgurō (Khamas rāga)
12. Nadabrahma (Nadabrahma rāga)
13. Ininamakkoru (Bilahari rāga)
14. Sri Tyagaraja Ashṭottara Sata Nāmāvali by Bangalore Nagaratnammal (1940).

## GLOSSARY

### 1. *Composers, Musicians, Patrons, Poets, Rishis and Celestial Singers*

[ *Note* :—The names are presented in the alphabetical order. But in the case of musicians, with special musical titles, their names are given under those titles. Thus Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar is given under *M*, Pallavi Seshayyar under *P* and Sankarabharanam Narasayya under *S* and so on.]

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ஸ்ரீராமஜயம்  
ஸ்ரீ தியாகராஜ ஸத்குரு ஸ்வாமினே நம:

## ஸ்ரீ தியாகராஜ ஸ்வாமிகளின் ஜாதகம்

ஜனனி ஜன்ம ஸௌக்யானாம் வர்தனி குல ஸம்பதாம்  
பதவி பூர்வபுண்யானாம் லிக்யதே ஜன்ம பத்ரிகா ||

ஸ்வஸ்திஸ்ரீ விஜயாப்யுதய சாலிவாகன சகாப்தம் 1689, கலியுகாதி யப்தா: 4868 - ஸர்வஜித்து நாமஸம்வத்ஸரம் - மேஷ மாஸம் - 25-ம் தேதி (சித்திரைமீ 25உ - 4th May 1767) வைசாக சுத்த ஷஷ்டி 14.50, புனர்வசு 6.8, ஸோமவாரம், குலம் 21-9, தைதுல கரணம் 14.50, திவி 26.29 இந்த சுபதினத்தில் ஸூர்யோதயாதி 15.30 நாழிகைக்கு கடக லக்னத்தில் கும்ப நவாம்சத்தில் ஸ்ரீராமப்ரம்மஸ்வாமிகளின் மூன்றாம் புத்திரரின் ஜனனம். ஜன்ம நக்ஷத்திரம் பூசம்.

### தக்கால க்ரஹங்கள்

பரணி	4-ல் ரவி	ம்ருகசீரிஷம்	1-ல் சுக்ரன்
புஷ்யம்	1-ல் சந்திரன்	ம்ருகசீரிஷம்	1-ல் சனி
ம்ருகசீரிஷம்	4-ல் குஜன்	சீரவணம்	3-ல் ராகு
அசுவனி	1-ல் புதன்	ஆயில்யம்	1-ல் கேது
உத்திரம்	1-ல் குரு		

ஏவம் நவக்ரஹ ஸ்திதய :

	கு-பு	சு-ச	குஜ
	ராசி சக்கரம்		லி-சந் கேது
ராகு			குரு

	பு		ராகு
லி	நவாம்ச சக்கரம்		
			ச-ச சனி
குரு கேது	சூர் குஜ		

மதுரை ஸௌராஷ்டிர ஸபையிலுள்ள குற்றாலம் சுவடி என்னும் ஒலை கிரந்தத்தில், ஸ்வாமிகளின் ஜாதகத்தைப்பற்றித் தெலுங்கில் கொடுக்கப்பட்டிருக்கும் முழு விவரங்கள் :

ஸ்வஸ்தி ஸ்ரீ விஜயாப்யுதய சாலிவாஹன கத சகா: 1689 - கத கல்யப்த: 4868, ஸ்ரீமத் வ்யவஹாரிக சாந்தர ஸௌரமரானுப்யாம் ஸர்வஜித்து நாமஸம்வத்ஸரம் மேஷ மாஸம் 25-ம் தேதி வைசாக சுத்த ஷஷ்டி 14-50, ஸோமவாரம், புனர்வசு 6-8, சூலம் 21-29, தைதுல 14-50, திவி 26-29.

ஈ சுபதினமந்து (இந்த சுபதினத்தில்) ஸூர்யோதயாதி 15.30 கடியலகு (நாழிகைக்கு) கடக லக்னமந்து (கடக லக்னத்தில்) கும்ப நவாம்சயந்து (கும்ப நவாம்சையில்) பாரத்வாஜ கோத்ர-ஸ்ரீமத் ராமாயணதி பிசஸங்க நிபுணலுனகு (நிபுணரான) ஸ்ரீராம பரம்மஸ்வாமிவாரிக ஸ்ரீமத் புண்ய த்ரிதீய புத்ரரத்ன ஜனனம்.

### தத்கால கிரக ஸம்பத்தி

பரணி 4 ரவி:	புஷ்யமி 1 சந்த்ர:
மருகசிர 4 குஜ:	அச்வினி 1 புத:
உத்தரபஸ்குனி 1 குரு:	மருகசிர 1 சுக்ர:
மருகசிர 1 சனி:	ச்ரவண 3 ராகு:
ஆச்லேஷ 1 கேது:	

ஏவம் நவக்ரஹ ஸ்திதய: ஜன்ம நக்ஷத்திரம் புஷ்யமி, ஆத்யந்த கடியலு 61-4, பாதம் ஒகடிகி (ஒன்றுக்கு) கடியலு 15-16 வந்துன, மொதடி பாதமுலோ செல்லு போனு; நிலுவ கடியலு 5-54க்கு ஜனனகாலமந்து சனி மஹாதச ஸம்வத்ஸரமு 19-டி கர்ப்பமந்து செல்லு போனு; நிலுவ ஸம்வத்ஸரமு 16 நெல 1 தினம் 0, கடிய 51 டிகி (51-க்கு) தீர்க்காயுஷ்யமஸ்து.

ஈ ஜாதகமுன்னு, குருஸ்வாமுலவாரி சரித்ரமுலுனு, தஞ்சாவூர் ராமராவ் வாரு ஸ்வாமிவாரு வத்தன்னு, ஸ்வாமுலவாரி தல்லி தண்ட்ருலவத்தன்னு அடிகி வ்ராசி பெட்டியுண்டிரி.

அதாவது இந்த ஜாதகத்தையும், குருஸ்வாமிகளின் சரித்திரத் தையும், தஞ்சாவூர் ராமராவ் அவர்கள், ஸ்வாமிகளிடத்தினின்றும், ஸ்வாமிகளின் பெற்றோர்களிடத்தினின்றும் கேட்டு எழுதி வைத்துக்கொண்டிருந்தார்.

## ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDUM

### GLOSSARY

*Note:—* The following songs were through oversight omitted in Glossary 2 pp. 214 - 216.

Aḍigi sukhamu 227

Amma rāvamma 171

Ananda sāgara 168

Bhajana parula 177

Brindāvanalōla 178

Brōchēvārevarē 177

Devi Sri Tulasamma 171

\*Durusuga kripa 180 (see the note on p. 214)

Enduku nīrdaya 177

Ennāḷḷu nī dōva 182

Eṭulaina bhakti 176

Eṭula kāpāḍuduvo 182

Ilalōpraṇatārti 227

Indukā buṭṭiñchitivi 182

Jānakirōmaṇa 178

Kalinarulaku mahimalu 182

Maravakarānava 177

Nāda sudhārasam 168

\*Nāmorālakīñchi 184 (see the note on p. 214)

Nāmoralanu vini 177

Nannu ganna talli 184

Ni pada pankaja 177

In the charaṇa of the kriti, *Enduku peddalavale*, the composer himself tells us the proficiency attained by him in the *nāda vidyā marmamulu* or the mysteries of music and in the different branches of sacred lore.

#### HIS NINDASTUTI KIRTANAS

*Aḍigi sukhamu* - Madhyamāvatī rāga  
*Ilalō Praṇatārti* - Aṭhāṇa rāga

The Phalaśrutis to his two operas prove that he was confident of the greatness of those two works.

Tyāgarāja was the first to write kritis with a single charaṇa. There are also his kritis containing 2 charaṇas, 3 charanas and 4 charaṇas.

Tyāgarāja did not study in the Sanskrit College at Tiruvaiyār as mentioned by one writer. He studied Sanskrit and Telugu including the grammar and literature in the two languages from his own father.

Kumbakonam Subbu was another disciple of Tyāgarāja.

---

Rāmabrahmam's younger sister's son was Mānambuchāvaḍi Veṅkaṭasubbayya.

Tyāgarāja's grandson passed away in his 35th year.

---

In his later days, Tyāgarāja was more after Mānasika pūja. The kriti, *Nāmakusuma mula* (Śrīrāga) confirms this. He slowly gave up the daily rituals. This is but natural in the case of a person who was fast reaching the stage of *Divine consciousness*. He was however frequently singing the Divyanāma kīrtanas. He was particularly fond of singing the Divyanāma kīrtana, *Tavaḍāsōham*.



On the day prior to his siddhi, Tyāgarāja described to his disciples, the size of the pit that should be dug for interring his mortal remains. He even mentioned the quantity of salt that should be thrown into the pit. This caused not a little surprise to his disciples and devotees.

Tyāgarāja in his last moments passed away with the *Añjali hastam* i.e. with the hands folded as in the act of prayer.

Ṣaṭkāla Gōvinda Mārār (see p. 69) after getting the well-merited praise from Tyāgarāja was requested by the latter to expound a rāga. Mārār took up Nilāmbari and sang it for one hour. The stillness of the night, the musical atmosphere of the place, the aptness of the time for the singing of that rāga, all contributed to make the ālāpana, delightful and fascinating. Tyāgarāja himself sang a pallavi in Nilāmbari rāga and asked Mārār to expound it. His niraval of the pallavi and the kalpana svaras to it thrilled every one. The music of Mārār was captivating and it left an indelible impression on the minds of the listeners.

Gōvinda Mārār was of a short stature. He was afflicted with rheumatism. The flag of challenge was attached to his tambūra. Nallathambi Mudaliyar, the Keeper of the Royal Stables of Trivandrum at the time, accompanied Gōvinda Mārār to Tiruvaiyāru.

Manibhu Saheb, who belonged to the Mahrāṭṭa Royal family and who, as a boy of ten years of age had seen Tyāgarāja, told Vaidyanātha Ganapāṭigaḷ of Tiruvaiyār

that Tyāgarāja was ever engaged in the creation of Rāmāyaṇa sāhityas. The Ganapāṭigaḷ gave me this information.

---

#### MUSICAL TRINITY

Tyāgarāja was principally emotional and occasionally intellectual.

Muthusvāmi Dīkṣitar was principally intellectual and occasionally emotional.

Syāma S'āstri was intellectual and emotional in an equal degree.

---

*Tiruvaiyāru* or the land of five rivers. The five rivers are Veṇṇār, Veṭṭār, Koḍamuruṭṭi, Kāvēri and Coleroon (கொள்ளிடம்). All these five rivers run parallel to each other and are within a distance of six miles.

The *sapta sthānas* are within a three miles radius of Tiruvaiyāru.

---

The vast Extensions to the Kalyāṇa Mahāl in Tiruvaiyār were all done after Tyāgarāja passed away. During his lifetime there was only one main building.

---

#### CORRIGENDUM

The first sentence on p. 122 should stand corrected in the light of what is mentioned on p. 163. When Tyāgarāja started on the trip to Kāñchīpuram and Tirupati, he had already lost his wife. He was carried singly in a palanquin by his siṣyas.

## RAJAS WHO RULED OVER TANJORE

*Naik Rulers.*

Chevappa Naik	1530 — 1572	A.D.
Achyutappa Naik	1577 — 1614	A.D.
Raghunatha Naik	1614 — 1635	A.D.
Vijayaraghava Naik	1635 — 1673	A.D.

*The Mahrāṭṭa Rulers.*

Ēkōji	1676 — 1683	A.D.
Ṣāhājī	1684 — 1710	A.D.
Serfojī	1711 — 1728	A.D.
Thukkojī	1729 — 1735	A.D.
Bavasāheb	1735 — 1736	A.D.
Pratāpasimha	1741 — 1764	A.D.
Tulajājī	1765 — 1787	A.D.
Amarasimha Mahārājah	1788 — 1799	A.D.
Serfōjī	1800 — 1832	A.D.
Sivājī	1833 — 1855	A.D.

---

## E R R A T A

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48	17	Read two, for three and delete Gauḷa
84	15	Read in for ni
110	12	Read Sojiri for Soriḷi
158	25	Read 'at for of
211	23	Delete 16
212	32	Delete 54
212	33	Delete this line
213	26	Delete 18
214	3	Add 176, 182
214	7	Add 182
214	16	Add 179, 184
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214	30	Add 182
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